

Notice of Meeting



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Scrutiny Commission

Tuesday 26 November 2024 at 6.30 pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

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Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday 18 November 2024

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Gordon Oliver on (01635) 519486
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Agenda - Scrutiny Commission to be held on Tuesday 26 November 2024 (continued)

- To:** Councillors Carlyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Jeremy Cottam, Paul Dick, Ross Mackinnon, Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, Martha Vickers, Jeff Brooks, Heather Codling and Iain Cottingham
- Substitutes:** Councillors Laura Coyle, Billy Drummond, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston

Agenda

Part I	Page No.
1. Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).	5 – 6
2. Minutes To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 24 September 2024 and 17 October 2024.	7 – 24
3. Actions from previous Minutes To receive an update on actions following the previous Commission meeting.	25 - 34
4. Declarations of Interest To remind Members of the need to record the existence and nature of any personal, disclosable pecuniary or other registrable interests in items on the agenda, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct .	35 - 36
5. Petitions Purpose: To consider any petitions requiring an Officer response.	37 - 38
6. Response to Faraday Road Football Ground queries Purpose: To provide a response to issues raised by Mr Paul Morgan in relation to the Faraday Road Football Ground.	To Follow
7. Unregistered and Unregulated Provision in Children's Social Care Purpose: To provide some background information and an overview of the use of Unregulated and Unregistered placements for children and young people in West Berkshire.	39 - 46

Agenda - Scrutiny Commission to be held on Tuesday 26 November 2024 (continued)

8. **Early Intervention and Family Help** 47 - 106
Purpose: To provide an overview of the Early Intervention and Family Help & Achievement Model and its impact on meeting the needs of families earlier and decreasing the need for costly long-term statutory involvement with children and their families.
9. **Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025-26 Planning** 107 - 184
Purpose: to set out the financial planning assumptions for the four years ahead over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This includes the latest assumptions on Government funding, and reform of Local Government Finance, and implications for the savings requirement in future budgets. The report also includes items that are to be consulted upon over the period 11 November to the 23 December 2024.
10. **Task and Finish Group Updates** 185 - 186
Purpose: To receive updates from the chairmen of task and finish groups appointed by the Scrutiny Commission.
11. **Health Scrutiny Committee Update** 187 - 188
Purpose: To receive an update from the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee.
12. **West Berkshire Council's Executive Forward Plan September to December 2024** 189 - 192
Purpose: To advise the Commission of items to be considered by West Berkshire Council's Executive and to decide whether to review any of these items prior to the meeting indicated in the Forward Plan.
13. **Scrutiny Commission Work Programme** 193 - 194
Purpose: To receive new items and agree and prioritise the work programme of the Commission.
14. **Exclusion of Press and Public**
RECOMMENDATION: That members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information of the description contained in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 specified in brackets in the heading of each item. [Section 10 of Part 10 of the Constitution outlines the exclusion of the press and public to meetings.](#)



Part II

15. **Unregistered and Unregulated Provision in Children's Social Care** 195 - 196
(Paragraph 2 - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.)

Purpose: To provide some background information and an overview of the use of Unregulated and Unregistered placements for children and young people in West Berkshire.

Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke
Service Director Strategy and Commissioning

If you require this information in a different format or translation, please contact Gordon Oliver on telephone (01635) 519486.



Agenda Item 1.

Scrutiny Commission – 26 November 2024

Item 1 – Apologies

Verbal Item

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DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

Councillors Present: Carolyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Jeremy Cottam, Paul Dick, Christopher Read, Billy Drummond (Substitute) (In place of Erik Pattenden) and Howard Woollaston (Substitute) (In place of Ross Mackinnon) (attending remotely)

Also Present: Councillor Heather Codling, Councillor Clive Hooker, Councillor Geoff Mayes, Councillor Justin Pemberton and Alex O'Connor (Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director - Children's Services), Neil Goddard (Service Director - Education and SEND), Susan Tanner, and Rebecca Wilshire (Service Director - Children's Social Care)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Erik Pattenden and Jeff Brooks

PART I

17. Minutes

The Chairman made the following observations:

- In relation to Item 9:
 - Officers had advised that schools must keep separate any independently raised funds because of VAT regulations.
 - More could be done to explain how the Schools Forum worked, since it was not clear that those attending represented a bloc of schools rather than their own individual school.
- In relation to Item 11:
 - Recent/planned publicity about the Council's scrutiny function included a press release, an offer to the media to interview the Scrutiny Commission Chairman, and an online video about the role of scrutiny.
 - The Chairman would work with the Principal Policy Officer to set up a log to track implementation of scrutiny recommendations back to Executive.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. Actions from previous Minutes

Members noted the updates on actions from the previous meetings.

Comments were made in relation to the following items:

- Actions 116 and 143 should be merged.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

- Action 160 – it was suggested that Jenny Legge should liaise with Councillor Ross Mackinnon regarding the ‘performance in pictures’ section of the Annual Performance Report
- Action 161 – this could not be progressed, since PDF pages of graphs could not be created using InPhase.
- Action 162 – it was suggested that Jenny Legge should liaise with Councillor Richard Somner regarding the sunburst diagram.
- Action 165 – the Chairman had discussed a possible joint work planning session with the Leader, but it had been agreed that this would not happen this time, however, Members could ask for a meeting at a future date.

19. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Chris Read declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 11, since he had previously been a member of Newbury Rugby Club and a rugby coach. However, this had been many years ago, and he reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he would remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

20. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

21. Crime and Disorder Committee - Community Safety Update

Nigel Lynn (WBC Chief Executive) and Superintendent Andy Penrith (Thames Valley Police) presented the Community Safety Update (Agenda Item 6).

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members congratulated the Building Communities Together Partnership (BCTP) on achieving a reduction in domestic abuse crimes.
- The current approach to tackling domestic abuse had been in place for between 3-6 months, and it was thought that a decrease in the number of children reported as being affected by domestic abuse may lag behind the decrease in reported crimes. Also, new obligations to capture the voice of the child, may lead to an increase in referrals to children’s social care. Conversations had taken place with the Executive Director – Children’s Services about how to resource this and use the data to protect vulnerable children.
- The Police were commended for their increased applications for protective orders in West Berkshire.
- It was highlighted that [Operation Sceptre](#) would be repeated later this year. Separately, it was reported that the recent amnesty for ‘zombie knives’ had been successful across the Force.

Action: Thames Valley Police to provide statistics for the recent ‘zombie knives’ amnesty.

- It was confirmed that there had been no recent stabbing incidents in The Nightingales estates. Although local Ward Members had not received complaints about violent crime in the area, Police intelligence had highlighted some issues, which had informed their approach and a funding bid to the Home Office.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

- It was acknowledged that Black, Asian and Mixed Race individuals were more likely to be the subject of 'stop and search' than other ethnic groups, but West Berkshire had the lowest levels of disproportionality in the Force's area. Stop and search was recognised as being a key determinant of community trust, and the statistics were regularly reviewed by an independent advisory group.
- Tackling rural crime was confirmed as a priority for the Police, and a Rural Crime Task Force had been set up. Residents were encouraged to report suspicious activity.
- It was confirmed that burglaries were not included within anti-social behaviour (ASB) crime statistics. While there had been a slight increase in burglaries, there were no significant trends and rates remained low. A change of approach meant that the Police would now attend all domestic burglaries, and incidents were being considered at weekly crime meetings to generate intelligence. It was noted that recidivist thieves were operating in the area.
- Members highlighted ongoing ASB incidents in Aldermaston Ward.
Action: Superintendent Andy Penrith to liaise with Councillor Dominic Boeck.
- An issue was highlighted in relation to a negative experience that a local resident had had with a police officer from Bracknell and Wokingham.
Action: Superintendent Andy Penrith to liaise with Councillor Howard Woollaston.
- It was highlighted that the fear of crime was a real issue. The Police were reviewing how they communicated with local communities, and they were looking at using a variety of different channels. This was picked up in Neighbourhood Policing Performance meetings.
- The previous lack of response to shoplifting and retail crime was recognised as an 'own goal' for the Police and had damaged community confidence, but Operation Purchase had been set up to address this. Now, reported crimes went through a triage process before being passed to a local team. The charge rate had improved and there were more officers on patrol.
- It was confirmed that nine mobile CCTV cameras were being installed around the Nightingales, funded by Safer Streets Grant.
Action: Alex O' Connor to liaise with Councillor Billy Drummond regarding the installation of the CCTV cameras.
- Members welcomed the Police response to issues along the A4 in Thatcham.
- It was suggested that the success of the BCTP was down to the strength of the relationships between the partners. Council officers were in regular contact with colleagues in the Police.
- It was confirmed that the Police restructure would take effect in May 2025.
Action: Superintendent Andy Penrith to provide updated contact details in due course.

RESOLVED to note the report.

22. Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report

Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care) presented the Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report (Agenda Item 7).

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Details of a recent whistleblowing incident did not feature in the report. Some aspects had to be referred to a neighbouring local authority (Reading Borough Council). Other aspects were reviewed by the Council's Internal Audit Manager, but these did not feature in the report, as this was part of a different process. However, she had found no basis for concern about the relationship between the Council and the provider. Investigations into wider issues related to the provider's workforce were not contained in the Annual Report, because the provider's headquarters were not in the District.
- Controls around Care Quality included the Care Quality Commission and the Council's own Care Quality Team. Reviewing Officers also picked up quality issues. In addition, intelligence about providers was shared between local authorities. It was recognised that there were workforce challenges, but in general, controls provided assurance that standards were being met.
- It was noted that the West Locality was the biggest of the three community teams and served the largest population. Although it had a larger number of complaints than the other two areas, it was considered to be proportionate.
- It was noted that the Council had a dedicated Children's and Adults' Social Care trainer who used the annual report to help inform the annual training programme.
- Key areas for the Council were ensuring that vulnerable adults were not subject to financial abuse and ensuring that service users were charged an appropriate amount for care in line with government guidance. The recent cost of living crisis meant that financial abuse was more likely, and people would also be more likely to balk at paying for care.
- It was explained that the Council accepted complaints verbally and in writing. Processes were in place to capture the service user's concerns. All complaints were an opportunity to learn. If they were addressed quickly then they may not escalate to a formal complaint.

Action: Paul Coe to provide Councillor Billy Drummond with details of the number of formal complaints received verbally and in writing.

- Members noted that compliments outnumbered complaints and also West Berkshire Council had fewer complaints than other comparable local authorities.
- It was noted that the report would be published on the Council's website. The website prioritised high traffic pages, so users may need to use the search facility to find it.
- Members asked for web links to be included on page 3 and to include a glossary to explain the acronyms used in the report.
- It was suggested that future reports should include more detail on the nature of the complaints.

Actions:

- **Officers to add web links to page three of the report.**
- **Include a glossary to explain acronyms used in the report.**
- **Future reports to include more detail about the nature of complaints.**

RESOLVED to note the Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2023/24 and to approve publication.

23. Children's Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2023/24

Councillor Heather Codling and Rebecca Wilshire (Service Director for Children's Social Care) presented the Children's Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2023/24 (Agenda Item 8).

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members expressed concern at the number of complaints and asked about which areas were in greatest need of improvement. Officers stressed that this was a complex area and there would always be different views amongst the parties involved. It was felt that the Council could be clearer about its processes and could provide service users with better information. It was also felt that the Council could do more to better involve fathers. However, it was felt that the area that would do the most to decrease the number of complaints was training for social workers.

Action: Amend the report to recognise training for social workers as a top priority.

- Officers highlighted that parents of children taken into care were most likely to complain. Reducing the number taken into care would reduce the number of complaints, but the Council would be failing to discharge its safeguarding duties. Members indicated that if social workers had more training, then this would help parents to be better informed about actions being taken and why, and they would be less likely to complain as a result.
- Members asked about the use of the term 'restorative'. This described an approach where the Council did things 'with' rather than 'to' families. It involved open and reflective conversations with families and other stakeholders.
- Members felt that children's complaints should be a key focus for the report. Officers explained that the Council did not get many complaints from children directly, and adults often advocated on children's behalf. However, it was recognised that future reports could include more feedback from families and children.
- Members were encouraged to attend Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP), which sought to hear the voices of children. It was suggested that the Member training programme should include a session on the CPP. Although there were six Members on the CPP, the last meeting had been cancelled due to poor attendance. It was suggested that dates could be better publicised to Members. Consideration was being given to moving administration of the CPP to Democratic Services.

Actions:

- **Confirm if CPP is included in the Member training programme.**
- **Publicise future CPP meetings to ensure that Members are aware.**

RESOLVED to note the Children's Social Care Complaints Annual Report 2023/24 and to approve publication.

24. SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value

Councillor Heather Codling (Executive Portfolio Holder – Children and Family Services) and Neil Goddard (Service Director – Education and SEND) presented the report on SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value (DBV) (Agenda Item 9).

The following points were raised in the debate:

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

- Officers explained that SEND was a complex area, and it could be difficult to find precise ways of measuring the impacts. Since the publication of the delivery plan, officers had continued to refine the impact measures and associated data. It was confirmed that the delivery plan did not contain the full range of performance measures, and a detailed SEND dashboard was in development. It was proposed to bring this to a future meeting to demonstrate progress.

Action: Bring the performance dashboard to a future Scrutiny Commission meeting.

- It was confirmed that the aim of reducing the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) would only be achieved where they were not considered necessary to improve outcomes for affected children. Lots was being done to create early help services and support schools to be as inclusive as possible. This would help parents to feel confident that their children's needs were being met and reduce calls on EHCPs. These would still be put in place where needed.
- Officers indicated that the Council was in the 'developing solutions' phase of the DBV programme. It was acknowledged that there had not been much sharing of findings/best practice between local authorities, but this would be raised with central government. The programme was focusing on improving services and outcomes for children and young people and their families, which would in turn help to reduce costs. However, this was not a quick fix.

Action: Officers to suggest sharing of findings/best practice between local authorities to central government.

- Clarification was provided regarding the accumulated deficit. It was explained that this would be affected by clawback, but it was expected to be around £7.5 million.
- It was confirmed that Susan Tanner's team was funded for one year to deliver transformation activity after which time this would become core business and Neil Goddard's team would take over. Restructuring would be necessary to reflect proposed changes to roles (e.g., commissioning would be taken out of the SEND role). The restructure would also provide an opportunity to work in a different way and create a more coherent offer to schools (e.g., around mental health support) which would help them to better support their pupils.

Action: DfE Regional Director to be invited to the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 13 March 2025.

- Officers highlighted significant differentials between schools in their use of exclusions and suspensions. Officers were seeking to challenge schools and to understand what could have been done in advance to support them and deliver a different outcome (e.g., alternative provision or behaviour related services). One school was recognised as an outlier in terms of the number of exclusions - officers indicated that they would raise their concerns with the Department for Education (DfE).
- In relation to funding, it was explained that the aim was to achieve a fair, consistent and transparent system, so schools understood what support was available, and what funding was allocated to individual pupils.
- Members noted that the Council had lost a number of educational psychologists. These roles were in high demand nationally, but there was a shortage in the market. Also, they were able to work privately and trade directly with schools, which could be more lucrative than working for a local authority. The Council had stopped offering traded services to schools in the autumn term to focus on statutory services. Interim resource had been increased, which was very expensive. However, recruitment was

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

underway, and it was hoped to be able to offer traded services again in the New Year, including a Principal Education Psychologist. In addition, the Council was exploring different ways of working, such as greater use of specialist teachers. It was noted that only 200 students were being trained nationally as Education Psychologists each year and it took eight years for them to be trained.

- Officers refuted the assertion that a shortage of Education Psychologists was a way of reducing spend and reiterated that current resources were being allocated to statutory work.
- It was confirmed that the Exclusions Officer and the Education Welfare Team got involved with academies to understand the reasons for exclusions. While the Council could challenge these, it had limited powers to intervene.
- An example was mentioned of an exclusion appeal that had lasted 9.5 hours. This was considered very unusual.
- Members noted that statutory reviews at transition had not been completed. It was confirmed that each EHCP was reviewed annually and was led by the schools, with involvement from the Council. The Council currently lacked the resource to support this work, with officers being allocated to supporting new EHCPs. However, interim resource had been put in place to support annual reviews and consideration was being given to permanent resource through the budget process.
- It was noted that an Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) and Local Area SEND inspection were expected imminently.

RESOLVED to note the report.

25. Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group Report

Councillor Paul Dick presented the Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group Report (Agenda Item 10).

The following points were raised in the debate:

- Members and officers (including former officers) were thanked for their contributions to the work of the Task and Finish Group.
- It was confirmed that if the Scrutiny Committee supported the Task and Finish Group's recommendations, they would be referred to the Executive for consideration.
- Officers indicated that the Emergency Planning Team had plans that could be consulted when needed. These would be updated to reflect lessons learned from the Covid pandemic.
- It was noted that links with Health colleagues had improved following the establishment of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) - the Council's Chief Executive regularly met with his counterparts in the ICB and NHS Trusts.
- It was suggested that there was a huge range of capacity and competence, and there was a need to ensure that best practice examples could be replicated across the district. Often it was volunteers who were coordinating efforts. It was suggested that there was a need for a database of people and organisations that should be maintained.
- The report had been taken to Corporate Board where the following observations had been made:

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

- Recommendation 8 – It was suggested that the Berkshire Prosperity Board, or equivalent body, could play a coordinating role.
- Recommendation 15 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had a expiry date, so large stocks could not be held indefinitely.
- It was recognised that the Council and its partners needed the ability to respond to avoid intolerable harm to vulnerable people and this should be at the heart of emergency plans.
- It was noted that another pandemic was at the top of the Cabinet Office's Risk Register.
- Members highlighted that turnover of staff could result in a lack of awareness of emergency plans, and stressed the need to make senior managers aware of plans on a regular basis, and for regular scenario testing, with any observations arising from those tests being incorporated into the plans.

Actions:

- **Update the report's recommendations to take account of Corporate Board's comments.**
- **Maintain a database of volunteers and organisations who are willing to provide community support in the event of an emergency.**
- **Make senior managers aware of emergency plans on a regular basis to allow for staff turnover.**
- **Undertake regular scenario testing, with any observations arising from those tests being incorporated into the plans.**

RESOLVED to endorse the Task and Finish Group's recommendations and refer them to Executive for consideration.

26. Appointment of Task and Finish Groups

The Chairman introduced the item on Appointment of Task and Finish Groups (Agenda Item 11).

The Sports Hub Task and Finish Group was due to start in October and a pre-meeting was proposed to consider the background information.

Membership was confirmed as: Councillors Carolyn Culver, Jeremy Cottam, Paul Dick, David Marsh and Chris Read. It was confirmed that rules around political proportionality did not apply to Task and Finish Groups, but a second Conservative Member would be welcomed.

Action: Check if Councillor Ross Mackinnon wished to nominate another Conservative Member for the Sports Hub Task Group.

Councillor Howard Woollaston highlighted that his former title was incorrect in the terms of reference.

Action: Correct Councillor Woollaston's former title to Executive Portfolio for Housing, Leisure, Culture and Sport in the terms of reference.

It was noted that Councillor Chris Read had offered to be chairman for the Project Management Task and Finish Group.

It was suggested that Faraday Road be dropped from the Project Management Task Group terms of reference, since concerns related to a procurement issue, and Faraday

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

Road had not been set up as a major project. Instead, it was suggested that this be covered separately at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Commission. Elements of Faraday Road would be picked up as part of the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group.

Members felt that it would be good to have three projects to consider in order to get a more representative sample.

Action: Propose a third project for the Project Management Task and Finish Group to consider in consultation with senior officers.

It was confirmed that the Task Group would look at project methodology generally before considering Care Director and iTrent.

Councillor Dominic Boeck proposed that Faraday Road be considered separately from the Project Management Task and Finish Group. The motion was seconded by Councillor Paul Dick. At the vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED to consider Faraday Road separately from the Project Management Task and Finish Group.

27. Health Scrutiny Committee Update

Members considered the Health Scrutiny Committee Update (Agenda Item 12).

The Chairman read out the update provided by Councillor Martha Vickers. This can be viewed on the meeting recording here:

[Scrutiny Commission, Wednesday 24 September 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

It was noted that the intention was for the Health Scrutiny Committee Chairman to be made a member of the Scrutiny Commission at the next meeting of Council.

28. West Berkshire Council Executive Forward Plan September to December

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Council Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 13 for the period covering September to December 2024).

Members asked about the Care Homes Contract Award report. Officers explained that the Council had published a tender for an external provider to take over the operation of Birchwood and Willows Edge Care Homes. Evaluation of the tenders would take place during the first week of October. The report to Executive on 8 November 2024 would make a recommendation about whether to award the contract. Members noted that if they wished to consider that report, it would have to be via a call-in of the decision.

Action: Paul Coe to provide a written update about the Care Homes Contract Award report to the Scrutiny Commission Chairman.

It was noted that the Forward Plan still mentioned Catalin Bogos, who had recently left the Council.

Action: Reassign items in the Forward Plan currently allocated to Catalin Bogos.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

29. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered the draft Work Programme (Agenda Item 14).

It was noted that the Chief Executive had sent an email to the Scrutiny Commission Chairman setting out a number of suggestions for possible scrutiny topics. Comments were made on some of these items as follows:

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 - MINUTES

- Fostering had been reviewed recently.
- Mental health services for adults and children, and maternity mental health were already in the Health Scrutiny work programme.
- CAMHS was due to be considered by a Health Scrutiny Task Group.
- Effective Working with Communities and Partners Organisations needed further explanation.
- Facilitating Growth could be considered by Planning Advisory Group.
- Housing was being considered by Health and Wellbeing Board and a report was being taken to Corporate Board.

Officers suggested that the Commission should focus on areas of high spend/ risk such as aspects of Children’s Services. Members highlighted that the Commission planned to look at attainment of children on free school meals compared to all children, and the SEND High Needs Block would be reviewed every six months.

There was discussion about a possible review of housing related issues and local housing associations. It was suggested that the three largest local housing associations could be invited to attend a future meeting. Any reviews would need to be coordinated with the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure there were no conflicts.

It was confirmed that Councillor Stuart Gourley was the Executive Member with responsibility for flooding issues and he would be attending the special Scrutiny Commission on 17 October 2024 to present the Section 19 Report.

It was suggested that the Commission may wish to review the Council’s Transformation activities at a future date. This could be considered as a single item agenda.

Action: Chairman to communicate with the Executive Directors about future items for Scrutiny.

RESOLVED to note the work programme.

(The meeting commenced at 6.31 pm and closed at 9.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 2024

Councillors Present: Carlyne Culver (Chairman), Dominic Boeck (Vice-Chairman), Antony Amirtharaj, Erik Pattenden, Christopher Read, Martha Vickers and Laura Coyle (Substitute) (In place of Jeremy Cottam)

Also Present: Jon Winstanley (Service Director (Environment)), Carolyn Richardson (Service Manager - Emergency Planning) and Paul Bacchus (Principal Engineer (Drainage and Flood Risk)), Councillor Nigel Foot (Executive Portfolio Holder: Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside), Councillor Stuart Gourley (Executive Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways), Councillor Clive Hooker, Councillor Geoff Mayes, Councillor Matt Shakespeare, Pete Devery (Angling Trust), Edward Hanrahan (Pang Valley Flood Forum), Chris Harris (Lambourn Valley Flood Forum), Charlotte Hitchmough (Action for River Kennet), Keith Hoddinott (Thatcham Flood Forum), Paula Saunderson (Newbury Flood and Drainage Action Group), Martyn Wright (East Garston Flood and Pollution Forum), Maddy Adams (Environment Agency), Dave Willis (Environment Agency), Shelly Hartnoll (Thames Water), Nikki Hines (Thames Water), Denise Kinsella (Thames Water), Danny Leamon (Thames Water), Sean Walden (Thames Water) and Gordon Oliver (Democratic Services)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Councillor Paul Dick and Councillor Ross Mackinnon

PART I

30. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Carlyne Culver declared an interest in Agenda Items 3, 5 and 5 by virtue of the fact that she was the flood warden for East Ilsley, but reported that, as her interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matters.

31. Winter 2024 Flooding Debrief

The Chairman explained the format of the meeting. It was agreed that because of the inter-relationships between the items, questions and debate would be deferred until after all of the presentations had been received. A summary of the discussions is provided in the Minutes for Agenda Item 5, 'Thames Water and Environment Agency'.

Councillor Stuart Gourley (Executive Portfolio Holder: Environment and Highways) and Carolyn Richardson (Service Manager – Joint Emergency Planning Unit) gave a verbal update on the Winter 2024 Flooding Debrief (Agenda Item 4). Their presentations may be viewed on the recording:

[Scrutiny Commission, Thursday, 17 October 2024 \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

RESOLVED to note the report.

32. 2024 Section 19 Flood Report

Jon Winstanley (Service Director – Environment) introduced the 2024 Section 19 Report (Agenda Item 3). The presentation may be viewed on the recording:

[Scrutiny Commission, Thursday, 17 October 2024 \(youtube.com\)](#)

Questions and debate for Agenda Items 3 to 5 were deferred until after all the presentations had been received. A summary of the discussions is provided in the Minutes for Agenda Item 5, 'Thames Water and Environment Agency'.

RESOLVED to note the report.

33. Thames Water and Environment Agency

Danny Leamon (Performance Director – Waste) and Shelly Hartnoll (Area Network Manager) provided an update on behalf of Thames Water. The presentation may be viewed on the recording:

[Scrutiny Commission, Thursday, 17 October 2024 \(youtube.com\)](#)

It was noted that Thames Water had provided written responses to questions submitted by West Berkshire Councillors, Flood Wardens, Action for the River Kennet (ARK) and the Angling Trust. These were provided within one of the supplementary agenda packs.

Maddy Adams (Thames Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager) and Dave Willis (Area Environment Manager, Thames Area) provided an update on behalf of the Environment Agency. The presentations may be viewed on the recording:

[Scrutiny Commission, Thursday, 17 October 2024 \(youtube.com\)](#)

The Commission noted the following updates on Actions 141 and 143 from the Scrutiny Commissions Action Log:

- **Action 141** – No response had been received in reply to letters to Ministers of the previous government. It was confirmed that letters would be sent to Ministers of the new administration. Also, the MP for Newbury had written to Ofwat about sewage related issues. Meetings had taken place between the Council and Thames Water around larger infrastructure projects and plans. Work was also progressing on joint comms initiatives.
- **Action 143** – Thames Water had undertaken water tests in Northbrook. A walkover had been undertaken with the Environment Agency, and further testing had been agreed.

Members of Scrutiny Commission and local Ward Members asked questions of WBC Officers, Thames Water and the Environment Agency, and were given the following answers:

- The government's threshold of 50 homes in order to be eligible for flooding support was more challenging for small local authorities to achieve than for larger counties. Representations had been made to central government on that point. However, this highlighted the importance of residents coming forward to say that their property had been affected by flooding.
- Provision of immediate support to households affected by flooding would require central government to change their approach.
- The Council had recently updated its phone system, which would allow for more flexible approaches to emergency community support. An emergency phone number

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 17 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

could be provided for residents to call for flooding support, but the preference was for people to report issues online where possible.

- While it was difficult for the Council to provide detailed/real-time flooding information to residents, officers agreed to look at how future comms could be improved.
- The Environment Agency (EA) acknowledged that there were issues with service users accessing their flood warning maps. When going through the Gov.uk website, visitors had to click on a hyperlink to access the map - this was done for accessibility reasons. While some flood warning areas covered relatively large areas, the EA tried to give more detail within the wording of the warning itself.
- It was explained that (with limited exceptions) the Council's policy was not to provide sandbags, since they were ineffective, expensive, and became contaminated by flood water. It was better to have property level protection measures such as air brick flood covers and door guards. Residents were encouraged to visit the EA website to check their home's risk of flooding.
- Officers acknowledged the need for proactive communications with residents.
- After the 2014 floods, government grants were allocated to households to implement property level protection measures. It was noted that not all property owners wanted the measures.
- Thames Water found drop-in sessions / parish meetings to be useful for educating customers and delivering key messages. Sessions had previously been held in Lambourn and Hampstead Norreys and Thames Water would be happy to organise additional drop-in sessions or attend parish council meetings.
- It was acknowledged that the EA's models for predicting peak river levels were imperfect. Additional interpretation was necessary, drawing on experience of local catchments. Tolerances were generally ± 7 cm for peak flood levels. Also, predictions of when peak water levels would occur could be out by up to 24 hours. It was felt that sharing model outputs with service users could provide false reassurance. Work was ongoing to improve the models.
- The EA's planned new flood warning system would help to clarify likely flood risk.
- The EA had an annual maintenance schedule which included debris removal, but this was more challenging when water levels were high. Smaller items of debris were often cleared by stormwater. Residents were encouraged to report blockages to the EA via their 24 hour emergency line on 0800 80 70 60.
- The Council's drain clearance programmes were developed using a risk-based approach and had to be delivered within available budgets. However, additional cleaning was undertaken in response to emergencies and maintenance frequencies were often updated on the basis of responding to emergency reports.
- It was explained that the Council preferred to work with landowners to inform them of their responsibilities and encourage them to clear their ditches, with enforcement powers used only where necessary.
- Members asked the EA about changes since 2014 relating to Section 18. The EA did not have this information to hand, but they offered to respond to the question following the meeting.

Action: Councillor Chris Read to clarify the question for the EA to respond to following the meeting.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 17 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

- The EA confirmed that it had received additional funding from this financial year from increased water quality permit charges and government grant in aid and this was being used to fund a larger and more specialised workforce to enhance its water company regulation.
- It was confirmed that work to the downstream riverbed to reduce the water level at Bucklebury Ford would require a permit to ensure this did not increase flood risk elsewhere. A request would have to be submitted by the landowner, or the Council would need to prioritise it within their expenditure programme.
- Thames Water explained that particular conditions with high groundwater and rainfall were needed for sewer infiltration to occur at Stanford Dingley. This made issues difficult to detect. Sewer depth monitors had been installed at various locations and improvements to aerials were being investigated to improve data transfer. Investigations, sewer lining, and manhole sealing had been undertaken in the area. Works to seal a local storm tank had started, but water levels needed to drop before this could be completed. Although tankers had previously been deployed in Stanford Dingley, last winter was the wettest on record, which had stretched resources, and meant that tankers could not be deployed to all areas. Pollution was considered to be preferable to flooding customers' properties. Local properties had been fitted with flood protection measures. Reassurance was provided that Stanford Dingley had not been forgotten.

Action: Thames Water to provide Councillor Chris Read with details of sewer lining works in Stanford Dingley.

- It was acknowledged that flood risk data provided as part of the conveyancing process was outdated, but it was confirmed that new mapping would be available from spring 2025.
- 'Citizen science' data was welcomed by the EA to supplement its core environmental monitoring information. The challenge was how best to manage and use the evidence for catchment planning.
- The EA confirmed that they liaised with the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and provided them with expert advice where necessary. It was considered that the CRT had done an excellent job of operating their assets during the recent flood events.
- The EA indicated that they provided advice to sluice owners and provided feedback if owners were not operating them appropriately. However, there were some assets that had become orphaned/abandoned.
- Thames Water committed to look again at compensation levels for customers who were affected by sewage issues for extended periods.

Action: Thames water to look again at customer compensation levels.

- It was explained that while Thames Water was not a statutory consultee for planning applications, modelling was undertaken with Ofwat to understand the implications of planned growth and the level of investment required to support that. Customers had a 'right to connect' to the network and development could not be prevented. Infrastructure charges were pooled to help pay for network upgrades. However, upgrades were only on the basis of additional demand - charges could not be sought to tackle pre-existing issues. Work was ongoing to tackle groundwater infiltration to prevent flooding.
- Thames Water considered that privatisation had been positive - it had directed more investment into the water industry than otherwise might have been possible.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 17 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

However, under-investment in the network had resulted in significant levels of asset debt - this was partly due to the industry seeking to keep bills low. It was acknowledged that public perceptions had changed, and the industry was being challenged to improve. While previous efforts had focused on addressing leakage, the focus had shifted to preventing pollution. Proposed levels of investment demonstrated Thames Water's commitment. They were working hard to secure investment for the next 12-18 months until the final determination had been agreed.

- Thames Water apologised if their response regarding the impacts of their roadworks in Pangbourne had appeared dismissive. They had thousands of permits per year, but they were only prosecuted a handful of times. However, they acknowledged that they received a large number of fixed penalties for failing to comply with permits. An automated system was being introduced, which should help to address the issue. The Pangbourne incident was being investigated through a serious incident review. The preferred approach was to apply for the permit in the normal way and to ask for early entry. The emergency process was used for leaks that were likely to cause damage or a risk to public safety.

Action: Thames Water to provide Councillor Matt Shakespeare with details of the percentage of emergency permits that were related to faults reported within the 12 hour emergency window, and the results of the serious incident review into the works in Pangbourne on 18 September 2024.

- Thames Water was not aware of the latest government position with regards to revoking the 'right to connect' to water companies' networks, but offered to check this.

Action: Thames Water to report back with the latest government position with regards to revoking the 'right to connect' to water companies' networks to Councillor Stuart Gourley.

- Thames Water confirmed that they were required to reduce the number of storm overflows and £800M had been allocated for that purpose, including for a number of sites in West Berkshire. Most of this investment would take place later in the next five year period. Thames Water would also be investing in their environmental and compliance programmes.
- Thames Water indicated that they did not have the capability to deploy large numbers of Portalooos during major flood events. Their priority was protecting their assets, since these could take months to recover. WBC Officers confirmed that it was not the local authority's responsibility to provide Portalooos, but the Council would liaise with the Flood Wardens and review each situation on its own merits.
- It was noted that Thames Water may be competing with other water companies for resources in the event of a major flood event and it was unlikely that there would be enough tankers to serve every affected area, particularly for long-term groundwater flooding. Thames Water was planning how to use its resources most effectively to mitigate the impacts on local communities.

The Commission resolved to suspend standing orders to permit the Flood Wardens, and representatives from ARK and the Angling Trust present at the meeting to speak.

The Flood Wardens, and representatives from ARK and the Angling Trust asked questions of WBC Officers and the representatives of Thames Water and the Environment Agency, and were given the following answers:

- The Business Case and funding bid for flood alleviation measures related to Northbrook would be managed in line with the priorities identified in the Section 19 report.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 17 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

- Thames Water's five year plan would address a number of aspects, including phosphorous removal at key sites. Although there were currently no plans for Hampstead Norreys, they undertook to review this, subject to funding made available in response to their business plan request. It was confirmed that priority would be given to promises made around the national environmental programme.
- Thames Water apologised if residents of Stanford Dingley felt forgotten. While they could not promise to resolve the issues there, they undertook to keep investigating them. Work to seal a local storm tank had been paused due to adverse weather conditions. Thames Water had continued to provide updates through the Pang Valley Flood Forum and they offered to attend additional meetings as required.
- Thames Water confirmed that they tried to work in collaboration with partners and they supported the proposal to form a task group to look at cross-cutting issues in the Lambourn Valley. However, they stressed that it was not always possible to solve issues within the constraints of available funding. The EA and West Berkshire confirmed that they would also be happy to work jointly to look at the issues. It was suggested that Project Groundwater (Defra funded innovation project) could be brought in to provide support. It was stressed that local residents also needed to be involved.
- It was noted that all three organisations had met with Operation Groundwater previously, and there had been positive outputs from these meetings.
- It was noted that Newbury had groundwater issues as well as fluvial flooding, but Operation Groundwater's interest stopped at Great Shefford. There was a discussion about the issue of pumping out groundwater, and where customers can pump to. This is a difficult question and parties agreed to convene to discuss, with the help of Project Groundwater, and including concerns about Newbury.

Action: EA to contact Project Groundwater with a view to setting up regular multi-agency meetings involving Thames Water, the EA, WBC and local Flood Forum representatives to discuss the issue of pumping groundwater.

- The EA confirmed that they worked closely with Thames Water on any requirements for temporary discharges. While they could not permit these, they had a regulatory position that allowed them to be accepted as a last resort, providing strict criteria were met. The link between temporary discharges and the overall environmental performance assessment of Thames Water was limited but was reflected to some extent through the performance measure relating to the total number of pollution incidents.
- The EA stated that a document provided to them in advance of the meeting about grass-cutting related to a blog post and was not a policy document. The EA undertook to get back to Mr Hoddinott about planned maintenance schedules in North Newbury. Also, it was confirmed that the EA undertook reactive maintenance where issues were reported that were judged to increase flood risk. In addition, they undertook 'flood runs' to clear trash screens, etc. It was confirmed that maintenance obligations sat with the riparian owners, but the EA often provided advice. Changing the height of riverbanks would require planning, funding and permits.

Action: EA to confirm dates of planned maintenance in North Newbury to Mr Hoddinott and Councillor Stuart Gourley.

- It was confirmed that Newbury Town Council would require relevant permits to undertake works on the riverbanks.

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 17 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

- EA officers indicated that they were not familiar with issues highlighted in relation to vegetation, silting and bank heights on the stretch of the River Lambourn between Donnington and the River Kennet, but offered to investigate these.

Action: EA to investigate the stretch of the River Lambourn between Donnington and the River Kennet and liaise with Ms Saunderson.

- It was explained that the Section 19 report was not set up for catchment based reporting – it was based on where properties were flooded. Officers were aware of flooding affecting properties on Riverside Lane.
- It was confirmed that sewer lining had a design life of around 50 years, but this depended on the materials used. Thames Water was always looking for new solutions to ensure they were using the best option. There was only a small window in which to locate groundwater infiltration. Groundwater levels were regularly monitored to identify when ideal conditions occurred. This was an issue for much of Thames Water's area, so they had to prioritise resource allocation. High priority locations were where filter units needed to be deployed.
- Although Thames Water was not a statutory consultee, it was consulted on most major planning applications. Where the Council had concerns about sewer connections, officers typically asked Thames Water for confirmation of sewer capacities. Also, it was noted that Thames Water could ask for Grampian Conditions to restrict development until improvements to sewer capacities had been made. Officers were not aware of the conversion of an office to 200 flats and asked for further details.

Action: Mr Hoddinott to provide details of the proposed office conversion.

- Officers indicated that they would be happy to receive additional suggestions for the action plan.

Action: Ms Saunderson to provide additional suggestions for the action plan for the lower reaches of the River Lambourn to Jon Winstanley.

Everyone present giving evidence to the meeting – including Thames Water, Environment Agency, flood wardens, ARK, Angling Trust – indicated that they were happy to share their email addresses with each other.

It was noted that there would be an article in a future edition of the Residents' Bulletin.

The Chairman suggested that people should be encouraged to watch the recording of the Scrutiny Commission meeting.

The following actions were agreed:

Actions:

- **Gordon Oliver to collate comments submitted after the meeting and forward them to Councillor Stuart Gourley.**
- **Jon Winstanley and Carolyn Richardson to review the flooding Q&As on the Council's Website.**
- **Officers to draft a letter to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in consultation with Councillor Stuart Gourley to lobby for water companies to be made statutory consultees for major planning applications.**
- **The Environment Agency to send the statements they read out and Jon Winstanley and Carolyn Richardson to send their presentation to Gordon Oliver so they could be included on the website.**

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 17 OCTOBER 2024 - MINUTES

- **Consider a forum of the three responsible authorities (WBC, Thames Water and the Environment Agency) and flood forums.**
- **Officers to consider how else to communicate with residents – including residents’ bulletin, parish councils, flood wardens.**
- **Gordon Oliver to share email addresses of those present so they could exchange information after the meeting.**

RESOLVED to note the report.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 9.32 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
89	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Consult with town / parish councils to understand what they wanted from the service	Felicity Harrison	In progress	The libraries report did not go to Executive on 21 September 2023 as originally planned. Instead, the vision for libraries, based on the recommendations of the Libraries Review, was presented to Strategy Board on 9 November 2023. The review was then deferred until the new Libraries Manager was in post. Elizabeth Beverley has now been appointed as Libraries Manager and work is now progressing on the libraries report and associated strategy.
90	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Ensure that 'priorities', 'review recommendations' and 'opportunities for future investment are aligned and that targets are set	Felicity Harrison		
91	07/03/2023	Libraries Review Libraries report to be updated before submitting it to the Executive	Felicity Harrison		
112	11/10/2023	Thames Water and Environment Agency Set up a meeting with Councillor Stuart Gourley and council officers to discuss the London Road pumping station	Thames Water	Complete	See Thames Water Q&A response #41.
116	11/10/2023	Thames Water and Environment Agency Meet with the EA and West Berkshire Council to discuss the Northbrook in Newbury	Thames Water	In progress	(Links to Action #143) Thames Water have supported with testing of the Northbrook. WBC have started an initial business case, and had initial conversations with the Environment Agency on potential funding opportunities for flood alleviation. The business case is being finalised, but will be managed in line with the emerging draft Section 19 report after the January 2024 district-wide flooding. This will require EA funding. (Also, see Thames Water Q&A #35)
130	06/02/2024	2023/24 Revenue Financial Performance Q3 Programme a report on the Transformation Programme in discussion with the Chairman and Gabrielle Mancini	Gordon Oliver	In progress	Scope of the report needs to be further defined before it can be programmed.
131	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Scrutiny Commission to review the Section 19 report at the October meeting.	Jon Winstanley	Complete	Reviewed at the October meeting.
132	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Officers to prepare a report similar to that produced following scrutiny of the 2014 flooding response in order to provide reassurance that the Council was joined-up when it came to: a) its flood and water management related strategies; b) the various council teams that responded to such emergencies; and c) communication between authorities.	Carolyn Richardson	Complete	Reviewed at the October meeting.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
134	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes For officers to provide an update about take-up of flood grants at the October meeting of the Scrutiny Commission	Jon Winstanley	Complete	This was discussed at the October meeting
135	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Pumping of groundwater and cellar water and the need for a long-term solution to be discussed at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission.	Jon Winstanley	Complete	This was discussed at the October meeting
136	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes For Scrutiny Commission to consider how lessons learned were being captured and how these could be used to inform Environment Agency decisions about future flood alleviation schemes.	Environment Agency	Complete	This was discussed at the October meeting
138	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Seek clarity at the October meeting of Scrutiny Commission that the WBC Section 19 report and any other relevant documentation and evidence gathered this winter/spring will be used to inform revisions to the GISMP documents.	Thames Water	Complete	See Thames Water Q&A response #3.
139	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes At October Scrutiny, ask Thames Water how they log calls, ask why people were told they were the only ones affected, check that the automatic reply email system has been rectified, and ask why people have been told there was no evidence when there clearly was.	Thames Water	Complete	Thames Water's system is being improved, with an update expected in October 2024, which should address these issues.
141	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Scrutiny Commission to be updated about progress with Councillor Gourley's motion that was passed at March Council.	Cllr Stuart Gourley	In progress	Letters to Defra ministers sent - no response received, but letters to be sent to Ministers of the new administration. Also, the MP for Newbury had written to Ofwat about sewage related issues. Meetings have taken place between the Council and Thames Water around larger infrastructure projects and plans.
143	25/04/2024	Actions from Previous Minutes Seek an update from Councillor Gourley about whether action would be taken following the results of the Northbrook tests.	Cllr Stuart Gourley	In progress	(Links to Action #116) Thames Water has undertaken water tests in Northbrook. A walkover had been undertaken with the Environment Agency, and further testing has been agreed.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
145	25/04/2024	Environment Strategy Operational Review Arrange a Town and Parish Climate Forum focused on biodiversity.	Jenny Graham	Complete	A presentation and discussion on biodiversity took place at the Town and Parish Council Climate Forum on 6th November 2024. The presentation has been shared with all Town and Parish Council's and forum members via a dedicated shared storage space set up for the forum. In addition, a presentation entitled 'Tackling the Climate and Ecological emergency – how Town and Parish Councils can get involved and be supported' was made at the District Parish Conference on 29th October 2024. This presentation included reference to biodiversity actions.
156	17/07/2024	Waste Strategy Undertake benchmarking with other local authorities to check the link between affluence and waste volume.	Daniel Warne	In progress	Assigned to officer for action when 2023/24 data is issued by DEFRA. Defra normally publish data in December, so work on this will begin in January.
157	17/07/2024	Waste Strategy Consider how measurement and reporting of community litter-picking could be improved, and consider increased provision of community litter-picking kits as part of the Waste Strategy	Daniel Warne	In progress	Consideration is being given to how this can be achieved, ready to implement as part of the Waste Management Strategy, which will be published in 2025.
160	17/07/2024	2023/24 Performance Report Year End Develop the 'performance in pictures' infographic to provide a more comprehensive summary of the Council's performance.	Jenny Legge	In progress	The infographics are meant to be a good news board of things that have been done, but aren't monitored in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan. They give the public a wider view of what the Council does. Some additional information is provided in the written report. A previous Peer Challenge suggested that we should do more to celebrate our successes, so this was devised to do that. This feature was requested by the previous administration, but it can be removed/amended. Further guidance on what is meant by a "comprehensive summary" would be helpful.
161	17/07/2024	2023/24 Performance Report Year End Provide historic data within the influencer measure dashboard.	Jenny Legge	Outstanding	The appendix shows the 'sparklines' (which is historical data) as officers are currently unable to produce PDF pages of graphs from Inphase. However, the Performance Portal, provides full graphs of data back to whenever the data started reporting, which in most cases is April 2019. The vision for reporting was that information was accessed online rather than through paper. However, PDF reports are produced where officers are able to do so.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
162	17/07/2024	2023/24 Performance Report Year End Amend the outer ring of the sunburst diagram to more accurately reflect performance.	Jenny Legge	In progress	<p>Officers are working with InPhase to do this, but can't get the visualisation to work.</p> <p>The overall RAG rating is not just a count of measures, but looks at the variation from target of all the measures in the category. It calculates the variance of each measure from its target and then calculates the overall RAG from this. However, the measures aren't weighted for importance - it is purely numerical.</p> <p>If Members prefer just a basic count of red, amber and green measures within each goal/priority, then an overall RAG rating would be a judgement call, or some standard rules would need to be agreed as to how to calculate the RAG rating. Alternatively, Members may decide that an overall RAG rating is not needed.</p> <p>Officers are working on creating some simplified reports, instead of the ready-built ones provided by Inphase. These will be discussed with the Leader in due course.</p>
163	17/07/2024	2023/24 Performance Report Year End Chairman of Scrutiny Commission to discuss issues relating to Housing First and empty homes with the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder.	Cllr Carlyne Culver	In Progress	Cllr Culver has discussed housing issues with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing and the Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board. A report on Housing and Health is coming to the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 5 December. The next steps will be agreed subject to the content of this report and any recommendations from the Health and Wellbeing Board
165	17/07/2024	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Set up a work planning session with Executive Members and Corporate Board.	Gordon Oliver	Complete	The Scrutiny Chairman met with the Leader of the Council. Also, the CEO forwarded a list of possible scrutiny topics, which was discussed at the meeting on 24 September 2024.
166	21/09/2024	Community Safety Update Thames Valley Police to provide statistics for the recent 'zombie knives' amnesty	Supt Andy Penrith	Complete	<p>TVP can't obtain the figures on the amnesty as they've been submitted to the Home Office and permission is awaited regarding sharing, however, as a force TVP believes they had one of the first arrests and charges under the new legislation (albeit in Oxford rather than West Berks). This shows their ongoing commitment as a force on taking these weapons off the streets and using the legislation:</p> <p>Man charged with knife offences and affray – Oxford Thames Valley Police.</p>
167	21/09/2024	Community Safety Update Liaise with Councillor Dominic Boeck regarding ASB issues in Aldermaston	Supt Andy Penrith	Complete	<p>Meetings have been held with the community and partners and there are plans in place to address the ASB. Insp Al Hawkett is leading on this.</p> <p>Contact details for Supt Penrith sent to Cllr Boeck.</p>

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
168	21/09/2024	Community Safety Update Liaise with Councillor Howard Woollaston regarding a bad experience that a residents had received from a Bracknell / Wokingham police officer	Supt Andy Penrith	Complete	Contact details for Supt Penrith sent to Cllr Woollaston.
169	21/09/2024	Community Safety Update Liaise with Councillor Billy Drummond regarding CCTV cameras in Greenham	Alex O'Connor	Complete	
170	21/09/2024	Community Safety Update Provide updated contact details once the TVP restructure is complete	Supt Andy Penrith	Complete	Email send to key contacts to disseminate as required.
171	21/09/2024	Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report Provide Councillor Billy Drummond with details of the number of formal complaints received verbally and in writing	Paul Coe	Complete	Confirmation was provided that around 98% of formal complaints are submitted in writing, but a small number are provided verbally. In most cases, officers speak to the complainant to confirm the Statement of Complaint before the investigation can start.
172	21/09/2024	Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report Add web links to page three of the report	Paul Coe	Complete	Changes incorporated into the final report.
173	21/09/2024	Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report Include a glossary to explain the acronyms used in the report.	Paul Coe	Complete	Changes incorporated into the final report.
174	21/09/2024	Adult Social Care Complaints Annual Report Future reports to include more detail about the nature of complaints.	Paul Coe	Complete	Changes incorporated into the final report.
175	21/09/2024	Children's Social Care Complaints Annual Report Amend the report to recognise training for social workers as a top priority.	Rebecca Wilshire	Complete	
176	21/09/2024	Children's Social Care Complaints Annual Report Confirm if CPP is included in the Member training programme	Gordon Oliver	Complete	A training session is being arranged for December 2024.
177	21/09/2024	Children's Social Care Complaints Annual Report Publicise future CPP meetings to ensure that Members are aware	Rebecca Wilshire	Complete	
178	21/09/2024	SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value Bring the performance dashboard to a future Scrutiny Commission meeting	Susan Tanner	In progress	A further scrutiny review of the SEND High Needs Block is programmed for March 2025.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
179	21/09/2024	SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value Suggest sharing of findings/best practice between local authorities to central government.	Susan Tanner		
180	21/09/2024	SEND High Needs Block and Delivering Better Value DfE Regional Director to be invited to the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 13 March 2025.	Cllr Carlyne Culver	In progress	Cllr Culver to liaise with AnnMarie Dodds prior to extending an invitaion.
181	21/09/2024	Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group Report Update the report's recommendations to take account of Corporate Board's comments	Gordon Oliver	Complete	Officer responses to the Task and Finish Group's recommendations will be presented to Executive on 12 December.
182	21/09/2024	Covid and Recovery Task and Finish Group Report Update the report's recommenations to take account of Scrutiny Commission Feedback: - Maintain a database of volunteers and organisations who are willing to provide community support in the event of an emergency. - Make senior managers aware of emergency plans on a regular basis to allow for staff turnover. - Undertake regular scenario testing, with any observations arising from those tests being incorporated into the plans.	Gordon Oliver	Complete	These have been incorporated into the appendix of the report to Executive
183	21/09/2024	Appointment of Task and Finish Groups Check if Councillor Ross Mackinnon wished to nominate another Conservative Member for the Sports Hub Task Group.	Cllr Paul Dick	Complete	No further nominations were made.
184	21/09/2024	Appointment of Task and Finish Groups Correct Councillor Woollaston's former title.	Gordon Oliver	Complete	
185	21/09/2024	Appointment of Task and Finish Groups Propose a third project for the Project Management Task and Finish Group to consider in consultation with senior officers.	Cllr Carlyne Culver	In progress	Project management aspects are being considered by the Sports Hub Task and Finish Group, so this could be the third project unless Members wish to identify an additional project to review.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
186	21/09/2024	West Berkshire Council Executive Forward Plan Provide an update about the Care Homes Contract Award report to the Scrutiny Commission Chairman	Paul Coe	Complete	Following the meeting, it was agreed that the Care Homes Contract Award report would be slipped to the meeting of the Executive on 12 December 2024, and for the report to come to Scrutiny Commission on 7 November 2024.
187	21/09/2024	West Berkshire Council Executive Forward Plan Reassign items in the Forward Plan currently allocated to Catalin Bogos	Sadie Owen	Complete	
188	21/09/2024	Scrutiny Commission Work Programme Chairman to communicate with Executive Directors about future items for scrutiny.	Cllr Carolyn Culver	Complete	
189	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Councillor Chris Read to clarify the question for the EA to respond to following the meeting.	Cllr Chris Read	Complete	Email passed to the EA for response. Response provided 4 November.
190	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Thames Water to provide Councillor Chris Read with details of sewer lining works in Stanford Dingley.	Thames Water		
191	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Look again at customer compensation levels for households left without sewage services for extended periods of time.	Thames Water	Complete	See attached responses
192	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Provide Councillor Matt Shakespeare with details of the percentage of emergency permits that were related to faults reported within the 12 hour emergency window, and the results of the serious incident review into the works in Pangbourne on 18 September 2024	Thames Water	Complete	See attached responses
193	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Report back to Councillor Stuart Gourley with the latest government position on revoking the 'right to connect' to water companies' networks.	Thames Water	Complete	See attached responses
194	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Contact Project Groundwater with a view to setting up regular multi-agency meetings involving Thames Water, the EA, WBC and local Flood Forum representatives	Environment Agency		

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
195	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Confirm dates of planned maintenance in North Newbury to Mr Hoddinott and Councillor Stuart Gourley.	Environment Agency		
196	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Investigate the stretch of the River Lambourn between Donnington and the River Kennet and liaise with Ms Saunderson	Environment Agency		
197	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Provide details of the proposed conversion from offices to 200 residential units.	Keith Hoddinott	Complete	Details provided re Bond House (former Bayer offices) - response awaited.
198	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Provide additional suggestions for the action plan for the lower reaches of the River Lambourn to Jon Winstanley.	Paula Saunderson	Complete	This was provided on 19 October
199	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Collate comments submitted after the meeting and forward them to Councillor Stuart Gourley.	Cllr Carolyne Culver / Gordon Oliver	Complete	
200	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Review the flooding Q&As on the Council's Website	Jon Winstanley / Carolyn Richardson	In progress	Work ongoing. Flood pages on website currently being reviewed and will be updated in December 2024.
201	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Draft a letter to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in consultation with Councillor Stuart Gourley to lobby for water companies to be made statutory consultees for major planning applications.	Jon Winstanley	In progress	
202	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Send verbal report / presentation to Gordon Oliver	Environment Agency / Carolyn Richardson	Complete	
203	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Consider a forum of the three responsible authorities (WBC, Thames Water and the Environment Agency) and flood forums	Jon Winstanley/ Thames Water/ Environment Agency	Complete	All three agencies have committed to attend the current active flood forums. No further action needed.
204	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Consider how else to communicate with residents – including residents' bulletin, parish councils, flood wardens.	Jon Winstanley	Complete	Joint communications between the three agencies has commenced in advance of the coming winter.

Actions arising from previous Meetings

Members are requested to consider the following list of actions and note the updates provided.

Ref	Date	Item/Action	Member/Officer	Status	Comments/Update
205	17/10/2024	Thames Water and Environment Agency Share email addresses of those present so they could exchange information after the meeting.	Gordon Oliver	Complete	Circulated with the Minutes.

Last updated:18 November 2024

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Agenda Item 4.

Scrutiny Commission – 26 November 2024

Item 4 – Declarations of interest

Verbal Item

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Agenda Item 5.

Scrutiny Commission – 26 November 2024

Item 5 – Petitions

Verbal Item

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Unregulated and Unregistered Placements

Committee considering report:	Scrutiny Commission
Date of Committee:	26 th November 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	31 st October 2024
Report Author:	Rebecca Wilshire
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide some background information and an overview of the use of Unregulated and Unregistered placements for children and young people in West Berkshire.

2. Recommendation(s)

To provide Scrutiny Commission with an overview and update on unregulated and unregistered provisions.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are no direct financial implications relating to this report, however there are financial implications in the use of unregistered and unregulated placements
Human Resource:	There are no HR implications

Unregulated and Unregistered Placements for Children

Legal:	<p>Placement and Case Review (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 amended the statutory scheme to make it unlawful for a <u>child of 15 or under</u> to be placed in an unregulated placement.</p> <p>This results in any placement in an unregulated placement ultra vires i.e. not within the powers of a Local Authority</p> <p>Revised Practice Guidance on the Court's approach to unregistered placements issued September 2023 sets out the circumstances whereby the Court may authorise a placement in an unregulated setting.</p> <p>The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023 along with the statutory guidance to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards dated March 2023 set out how supportive accommodation may be provided to looked after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17.</p> <p>Ofsted is the registration authority for supported accommodation and as registration authority regulates and inspects accommodation.</p>			
Risk Management:	Risks associated here are managed accordingly and require approval by the DCS and notification to Ofsted.			
Property:	NA			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		There is no equalities impact relating to this report. However, the use of unregulated and unregistered provision could impact on this area.

Unregulated and Unregistered Placements for Children

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		
Health Impact:		x		
ICT Impact:		x		
Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities:		x		
Core Business:		x		
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	No consultation			

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report sets out the law and legislation which exists relating to unregulated and unregistered provisions.
- 4.2 The use of unregulated and unregistered placements for children in care is a complex and often controversial area of social care in the UK and these provisions are contrary to the requirements of the regulatory framework.
- 4.3 This briefing aims to provide elected Members with a comprehensive understanding of these placements, including their definitions, the challenges associated with their use, and the potential impact on children's welfare and outcomes and West Berkshire data.
- 4.4 Given the rising demand for placements and the shortage of regulated options, this issue is becoming increasingly pertinent for local authorities across the country.

5. Supporting Information

Definitions

- 5.1 **Unregulated Placements:** These are placements are not approved in according with the requirements set out in Care Planning, Placement and Care Review Regulations, and not therefore registered with Ofsted. They are typically used for older children (16-17 years) in semi-independent living arrangements, where children are provided with accommodation and support rather than full-time care.
- 5.2 **Unregistered Placements:** These refer to placements (usually residential homes) that require registration with Ofsted but are operating without it. Examples include placements offering care to children under 16 or providing full-time care (even to those 16-17), without the appropriate registration status.
- 5.3 In September 2021, the law in England changed to prohibit the use of unregistered placements for children in care under the age of 16. This was a significant shift to ensure that all children in care under 16 receive placements in regulated settings, where there is oversight by Ofsted and adherence to minimum standards for care and safeguarding.

Key Details of the Change:

- 5.4 **Prohibition on Unregulated Placements for Under-16s:**
- 5.5 The change specifically targeted children aged 15 and younger, who could no longer be placed in unregulated settings such as independent or semi-independent accommodation without formal care regulation.
- 5.6 Regulated placements for this age group now require either foster care, residential care, or another Ofsted-regulated setting, ensuring they have adequate supervision, support, and protection.
- 5.7 In 2023, new national standards were proposed for supported accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds, aiming to enhance oversight and accountability in semi-independent placements. These standards are set to further protect this age group while recognising their increased independence.
- 5.8 Providers of services to 16 & 17-year-olds who made applications to Ofsted before October 2023 can still have children in their care whilst they are waiting for their registration to be completed by Ofsted.

6. Context and Scope

- 6.1 **Increasing Demand:** Rising numbers of looked-after children, especially adolescents with complex needs, have strained the availability of regulated placements.
- 6.2 **Placement Shortages:** Local authorities face challenges in securing suitable, regulated placements due to financial constraints, capacity limitations, and increased pressure from growing numbers of children entering care.

Unregulated and Unregistered Placements for Children

- 6.3 In West Berkshire, the use of an unregistered or unregulated placement is not considered suitable, however, there are times when this is unavoidable, and remains a national issue.
- 6.4 Despite the ban on using unregistered provision in 2021, Local Authorities across the UK continue to have no choice but to use unregistered providers due to the shortage of regulated accommodation available across the country. In April 2024 there were over 700 children living in unregistered children's homes, two thirds of these were under 16 years. A rise of 277% since the ban came into force in 2021.
- 6.5 The children who live in unregistered provisions are almost always those with the highest needs, the most traumatic histories and with the most dysregulated behaviours. They will have often lived in a number of different registered settings including children's homes and the placement begins as an emergency response to a child who has no other option and exhaustive placements have failed and the registered provider has given notice on the placement.

Challenges and Risks of Unregulated and Unregistered Placements

- 6.6 **Safeguarding Concerns:** Unregulated placements may lack rigorous safeguarding oversight, leaving children vulnerable to risks such as exploitation, abuse, neglect and inadequate supervision. They are not subject to regular independent scrutiny visits.
- 6.7 **Lack of Consistent Standards:** These placements may not follow the same care standards as regulated homes, resulting in potential variability in the quality of care and support provided.
- 6.8 **Emotional and Social Impact on Children:** Children in unregulated settings may feel isolated or unsupported, potentially worsening mental health issues, behavioural problems, and overall wellbeing.
- 6.9 **Legal and Ethical Issues:** Unregistered placements are a provision contrary to the requirements of the regulatory framework and pose a legal risk for local authorities. Using them can also raise ethical questions about fulfilling the duty of care.
- 6.10 In West Berkshire, where such provision is used, there are robust plans in place to ensure children are safe, supported and outcomes are closely monitored.

Benefits and Potential Justifications for Use

- 6.11 **Increased Autonomy for Older Youths:** Some older children may benefit from a setting that encourages independence, as long as the placement provides adequate support for life skills development.
- 6.12 **Child Best Interest:** Depending on the needs of the child, there can be some provisions, that whilst not registered with Ofsted are registered with CQC and are appropriate in meeting the child's needs.

Unregulated and Unregistered Placements for Children

- 6.13 **Resource Availability:** Unregulated placements offer a short-term solution for councils under significant placement pressures, particularly when there are no immediate, regulated alternatives available.
- 6.14 Many children enter care as they need to be safeguarded, on seeking appropriate provision this would also include family members, fostering and all registered provisions. The use of unregistered or unregulated is due to their being no safer option.

7. Use of Unregulated and Unregistered in West Berkshire

- 7.1 **Minimise reliance on Unregulated Placements:** Prioritise finding regulated placements for all children and use unregulated settings only as a last resort for older children, ensuring that they are well-suited to semi-independent living.
- 7.2 **Minimise any use of Unregistered Placements:** Prioritise foster care recruitment, engage with the independent fostering agencies to ensure all children under 16 are placed in a registered provision.
- 7.3 West Berkshire ensure there are robust processes in place for any child in an unregistered or unregulated provision. Agreement of an unregistered provision is approved at Executive Director level and there are robust systems in place for monitoring, including increased regular (minimum weekly) social worker visits, safeguarding checks, and risk assessments. There is always consideration given to whether a Deprivation of Liberty Order is needed, and the placement needs the oversight of the High Court.
- 7.4 Such provision would ensure staff have DBS checks in place, appropriate records and policies, level of due diligence still takes place to ensure children are safeguarded.
- 7.5 An Ofsted notification is completed for any child in an unregistered placement.
- 7.6 Unregistered and unregulated provisions are linked to our high-cost placements, often charging considerably more than a registered provider. These placements very often require higher staffing levels and are usually 'solo' placements, meaning the costs are not shared between different children.

8. West Berkshire Data and Children

See Appendix 1 (Restricted)

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Unregulated and unregistered placements present significant challenges and risks for children in care. While some flexibility may be beneficial for older adolescents preparing for independence, the safeguarding and quality concerns cannot be overlooked.

Unregulated and Unregistered Placements for Children

- 9.2 In West Berkshire, all unregistered and unregulated are overseen, tracked and have robust support plans around them. All these children have an Independent Reviewing Officer and regular statutory children in care reviews.
- 9.3 We continue to actively engage local registered providers to develop homes to meet the needs of those children requiring high levels of support in small group or solo settings.

10 Other options considered

- 10.1 Removing children from these placements would be an option, but this would place them at significant risk harm.
- 10.2 Not putting in additional measures to mitigate risks of unlawful placements is also an option but not recommended due to wanting to ensure children's needs met.

11 Appendices

Appendix 1 – West Berkshire Data and Children

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Wards affected: All wards

Officer details:

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Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Early Intervention and Family Help

Committee considering report:	Scrutiny Commission
Date of Committee:	26 November 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	14 November 2024
Report Author:	Karen Atalla
Forward Plan Ref:	N/A

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Early Intervention and Family Help & Achievement Model and its impact on meeting the needs of families earlier and decreasing the need for costly long-term statutory involvement with children and their families.
- 1.2 To highlight the benefits of early intervention, the work of our Early Response Hub (ERH) and collaborative working for children, their families, and the organisation.
- 1.3 The Department for Education’s (DfE) revised version of Working Together to Safeguard Children published in 2023 has removed the previous requirement for child in need assessments and casework to be reserved for qualified social workers.
- 1.4 This report will outline West Berkshire’s approach to managing any associated risks by merging targeted early help and child in need provision.

2. Recommendation(s)

This report is to support Scrutiny Commission to have oversight around our Early Help Service.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are no financial implications
Human Resource:	There are no HR implications

Early Intervention and Family Help

Legal:	There are no legal implications			
Risk Management:	This practice model increases risk awareness which enables a higher proportion of our cohort of 'children in need' to be supported by intervention workers/support staff across agencies bringing greater availability and access to collective resources.			
Property:	NA			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			Positive Impact as the model promotes equality by ensuring children and families receive a service appropriate to the level of identified need from the right person to the right place at the right time.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
Environmental Impact:		x		

Early Intervention and Family Help

Health Impact:	x			Intervening at an earlier stage has the potential to reduce levels of vulnerability in families and support them to develop strategies and strengths to prevent situations and challenges escalating. In turn bringing a positive impact to physical and mental health.
ICT Impact:		x		
Digital Services Impact:		x		
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Help people to help themselves and others • Improve the health and wellbeing of our resident through appropriate interventions • Support everyone to reach their full potential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help people to help themselves and others ○ Improve the health and wellbeing of our resident through appropriate interventions • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand our work with partner organisation and communities to improve service for local residents.
Core Business:	x			The Family Help & Achievement Model has shown positive impacts through early intervention and collaborative planning. Ongoing challenges such as resource limitations and complex needs require continuous effort and innovation to ensure sustainable positive outcomes. The Family Help & Achievement Model is key to achieving our aim of keeping more families together and avoiding the cost of statutory and higher-level interventions.

Data Impact:	x			As we collate richer data and feedback both quantitative and qualitative data can be refined and analysed to evidence the effectiveness of enhanced collaboration - to involve all partners, schools, the community, and voluntary agencies. Additional 'buy in' and sharing of resources can lead to cost effective improved outcomes for children and families.
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Partner agencies co located and virtual within CAAS and ERH have been consulted and are engaged in the model.</p> <p>Feedback from families and professionals relating to how we can improve service delivery, has been incorporated.</p>			

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report accompanies the slide deck to offer an overview of Early Intervention within the Council.
- 4.2 The Early Response Hub (ERH) launched in November 2019 and continues to be focused on prevention and intervention, ensuring families get the right help, at the right time, from the person or service.
- 4.3 The ERH provides support and intervention to families at the point they need it, with the aim of preventing escalation.
- 4.4 There is evidence from the Early Intervention Foundation that avoiding statutory intervention and intervention earlier has better outcomes for children and can also represent a cost saving for the local authority. See Appendix 2
- 4.5 Whilst there are budgetary constraints, the ERH continues to adapt to support family's needs and manage risks.
- 4.6 As a service they are consistently reviewing data, feedback and ensuring the services that are in place deliver, although demand remains a worry.

5. Supporting Information

Introduction

Early Response Hub (ERH).

- 5.1 ERH sits within the Children's Services front door and has 8 different elements of responsibility.

Early Intervention and Family Help

5.2 Each area has a focus on Intervention and Prevention.

5.2.1 ERH Triage (responding to families within three days or five days with a home visit) – these are families who typically require a single agency referral to a community service and referrals are made by the ERH Triage with the family's agreement, to break down barriers to services.

5.2.2 ERH Assessment (completing Family First level2b assessments) non statutory assessments completed over a maximum of 25 working days and can act as a foundation to a statutory s17 single assessment if level 3 concerns are identified during the assessment.

5.2.3 ERH Intervention on families in receipt of statutory intervention (six weeks of intervention focused on a particular worry or issue) – as part of the Family Help and Achievement Model, families may require secondary allocation to an Intervention Worker, to work alongside the social worker with the family, on a bespoke intensive plan of intervention, to reduce the worries and concerns.

5.2.4 Young Carers – identifying, assessment and supporting young carers in West Berkshire via assessments, reassessments and respite activities.

5.2.5 Reducing Parental Conflict (for co-parenting parents and training for professionals) – delivering reducing parental conflict training for separated parents to enable them to co-parent more effectively and delivering training to professionals to help them to understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse.

5.2.6 My Family Plan consultation service - the My Family Plan facilitators provide a consultation and advice service to lead professionals in My Family Plans which are a community led support plan.

5.2.7 Family Group Conferences (and Restorative Conferences) – the opportunity for a family to come together to identify a family plan to respond to the worries or concerns for children and families.

5.2.8 Family Help and Achievement Model – a new model of responding to families across the spectrum of need.

5.3 The Family Help and Achievement Model focuses on:

- **Prevention:** Early identification and intervention to prevent escalation of issues.
- **Intervention:** Tailored support based on the spectrum of need, from universal services to complex and severe needs.
- **Collaboration:** Working with families, communities, and professionals to co-create and solutions. Enhanced methods of collaborative working can deliver improved outcomes for children and their families.
- **Earlier Support:** Providing help at the earliest point to avoid crisis situations.

Early Intervention and Family Help

- 5.4 This paper draws attention to the importance of:
- **Investment in Early Help:** Emphasising the importance of investing in early help and prevention to achieve our aim of keeping more families together and avoiding the cost of statutory and higher-level interventions.
 - **Enhanced Collaboration and Commitment:** Highlighting the importance of strong relationships and commitment within the community, schools, partner agencies – statutory and voluntary.
- 5.5 We take responsibility for what is right for children, but also for West Berkshire and the organisation with an inclusive approach to decision making and shared accountability which assists with the identification of the most appropriate person to safely work with the child and family in need of help and support.
- 5.6 This approach leads to earlier identification of need utilising the model's multi-agency Family Achievement Meetings or Group Supervision and improves cross agency understanding of operational roles.
- 5.7 The organic development of this model and its innovative approach to managing demand through earlier help and intervention, was fast-tracked and ratified with the publication of Stable Homes Built on Love (SHBOL) and the subsequent amendments to Working Together 2023.
- 5.8 This report is intended to provide an update to Board on the development and progress of the Family Help and Achievement Model and its incorporation of the CIN Pilot.
- 5.9 Locally and nationally, it is recognised that a new way of working is required to manage the volume of work into Children's Services that includes Improved partnership working arrangements and shifting accountabilities for the oversight and support of Children in Need.
- 5.10 Providing referring agencies with higher levels of accountability and ownership, each stage of our Early Help progression has enabled the vision that has been introduced as a practice model that aligns with revised Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and SHBOL.

Background

- 5.11 The new model of practice is intended to enhance the current process, encouraging collaborative practice to bring '**The Right Person, to the Right Place at the Right Time**', safely utilising the use of non-qualified social work staff for a proportion of Child in Need (CIN) work.
- 5.12 This development will enhance the capability for the earlier identification of children in need bringing opportunity leading to access to advice and/or services that will prevent future escalation and remove the need for longer-term statutory intervention.

Early Intervention and Family Help

- 5.13 This progressive way of working will support West Berkshire's Children and Family Services in maintaining current staffing levels whilst addressing significantly increased complexity and demand for services seen locally and nationally.
- 5.14 To further develop our model of working moving on to future phases that incorporate innovative and smart use of resource streamlining council and community resources:
- 5.15 **Phase 1. Nov 2019 – 2021 complete.**
- 5.16 The Early Response Hub (ERH) was created and subsequently launched. Initially created as part of CAAS Triage in order to increase effectiveness in responding to non-statutory concerns and helping to reduce the previously high rate of repeat contacts.
- 5.17 **Phase 2. April 2023- 2024 complete.**
- 5.18 ERH formally merged with the Targeted Intervention Service and launched this new way of working alongside the Family First Assessment; a non-statutory 25 working day assessment which can, if required, provide the foundation for a statutory Single Assessment should the level of need require this. The purpose of the Family First Assessment was to reduce the numbers of Single Assessments concluding in no further action – right support, at the right time, by the right person.
- 5.19 **Phase 3. August - November 2024;**
- 5.20 The CIN pilot moved from the management of Family Safeguarding West team to the CAAS/ERH management. The CIN pilot is an 18-month pilot to test the use of alternatively qualified practitioners taking the role of Lead Practitioner as an alternative for those children that would previously have required social work input.
- 5.21 Incorporating the CIN Pilot into the Family Help and Achievement model of practice to bring assurance that the complexity of children and families is managed safely within a model that reduces but does not exclude social workers continuing to progress 'elements' of complex child in need work.
- 5.22 **Phase 4. November – ongoing**
- 5.23 Incorporate community-based family hubs into early help and develop an offer of support that has a wider reach across communities and incorporates partner agency services under one roof.
- Utilise current resource smartly and work with partners and agencies at all levels to explore and enhance the cost benefits associated with early help for everyone to increase resource and 'buy in'.
 - Attend partner agency forums to promote this early help and intervention and provide opportunities for partnership development, collaboration, and innovation to continually expand our ability to reduce need and risk.

5.24 Family Hubs remain central to Early Intervention

Family hubs remain central to early intervention for several key reasons:

- **Integrated Support:** Family hubs can be utilised to provide a single access point to a range of integrated community support services. This includes help with social, emotional, physical, and financial needs, making it easier for families to get the support they need without navigating multiple systems.
- **Early Identification:** If offering access to services within the community, family hubs can identify needs early and provide coordinated support before problems become complex. This early intervention can prevent issues from escalating and reduce the need for more intensive services later.
- **Community-Centric:** Each family hub can be tailored to its local community, ensuring that the services provided are relevant and accessible. This bespoke approach helps to build trust and engagement within the community.
- **Strengthening Relationships:** Family hubs prioritise building strong, trusting relationships with families. This relational approach ensures that families feel supported and understood, which is crucial for effective early intervention.
- **Value:** By co-locating services and promoting data sharing and collaborative working family hubs can make support visible and accessible with families only needing to tell their story once, to receive the right service at the right time from the right person to the right place.

Proposals

- 5.26 This report is to support Scrutiny Commission to have oversight around our Early Help Service

6 Other options considered

The other option would be to continue as we are which is not sustainable due to current demand. An enhancement to our current offer is required in line with SHBOL and Working Together.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Engaging the community and existing resource whilst building strong support networks will enhance the effectiveness of early help and support can be delivered in the right place for children and families.
- 7.2 This broader integrated approach requires the support of senior officers and the executive to support and promote partnerships and collaboration across West Berkshire.

Early Intervention and Family Help

- 7.3 This practice model increases risk awareness which enables a higher proportion of our cohort of 'children in need' to be supported by intervention workers / support staff across agencies bringing greater availability and access to collective resources.
- 7.4 Operating in this manner allows us to manage risks associated with children in need differently but safely. By integrating early help and child in need provision, we can provide timely and appropriate support, preventing issues from escalating into crises that require more intensive and costly interventions.
- 7.5 This model aligns with national standards and reforms and is a West Berkshire concept that has been developed in phases that has evidenced its effectiveness. Having read the landscape and developed this model, we have positioned West Berkshire as a leader in responding to SHBOL and improving outcomes for children and families.

8 Appendices

Appendix A - Slide Deck

Appendix B - EIF Cost of Late Interventions

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: All wards

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Document Control

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Version:		Date Modified:	
Author:			
Owning Service			

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1			
2			

Scrutiny Commission

Early Intervention and Family Safeguarding

November 2024

Early Response Hub

Early Response Hub (ERH)

- Our ERH was launched in November 2019 and sits within the front door of Children's Services.
- ERH provides support and intervention to families at the point they need it, with the aim of preventing worries from escalating and preventing the need for statutory services.
- ERH ethos is on a strength-based approach and relationship-based practice, with parents and families to support change

'The Right Service at the Right Time from the Right Person at the Right Place'



Early Response Hub (ERH)

ERH service delivery

The ERH has 8 different elements of responsibility:

- **ERH Triage** (responding to families within three days or five days with a home visit),
- **ERH Assessment** (completing Family First level2b assessments),
- **ERH Intervention for statutory child in need** (six weeks of intervention focused on a particular worry or issue),
- **Missing young people and those at risk of exploitation,**
- **Young Carers,**
- **Reducing Parental Conflict** (for co-parenting parent and training for professionals)
- **My Family Plan consultation service,**
- **Family Group Conferences** (and Restorative Conferences)

‘The Right Service at the Right Time from the Right Person at the Right Place’

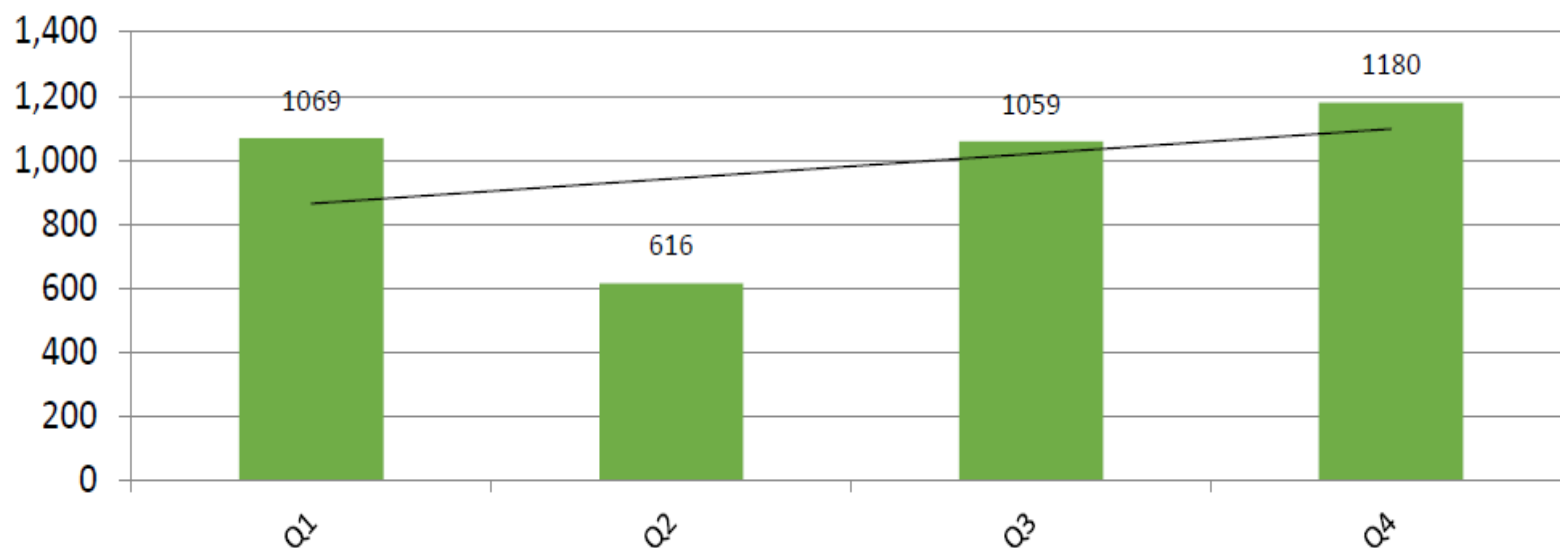
Partnership Working



What our Data Tells Us

ERH Triage responds to families who require a community support plan to respond to their presenting worries/concerns.

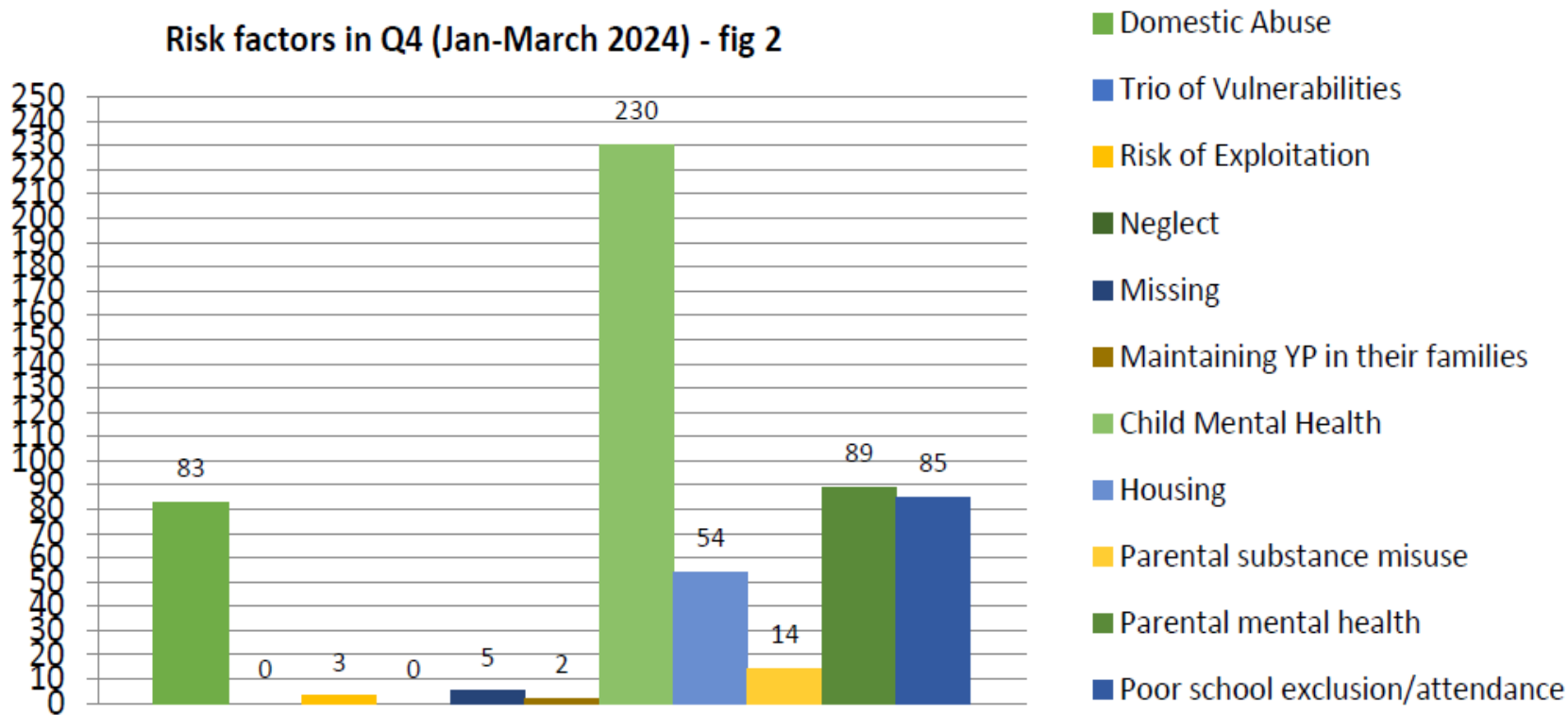
Number of children responded to by ERH Triage fig 1



Risk Factors

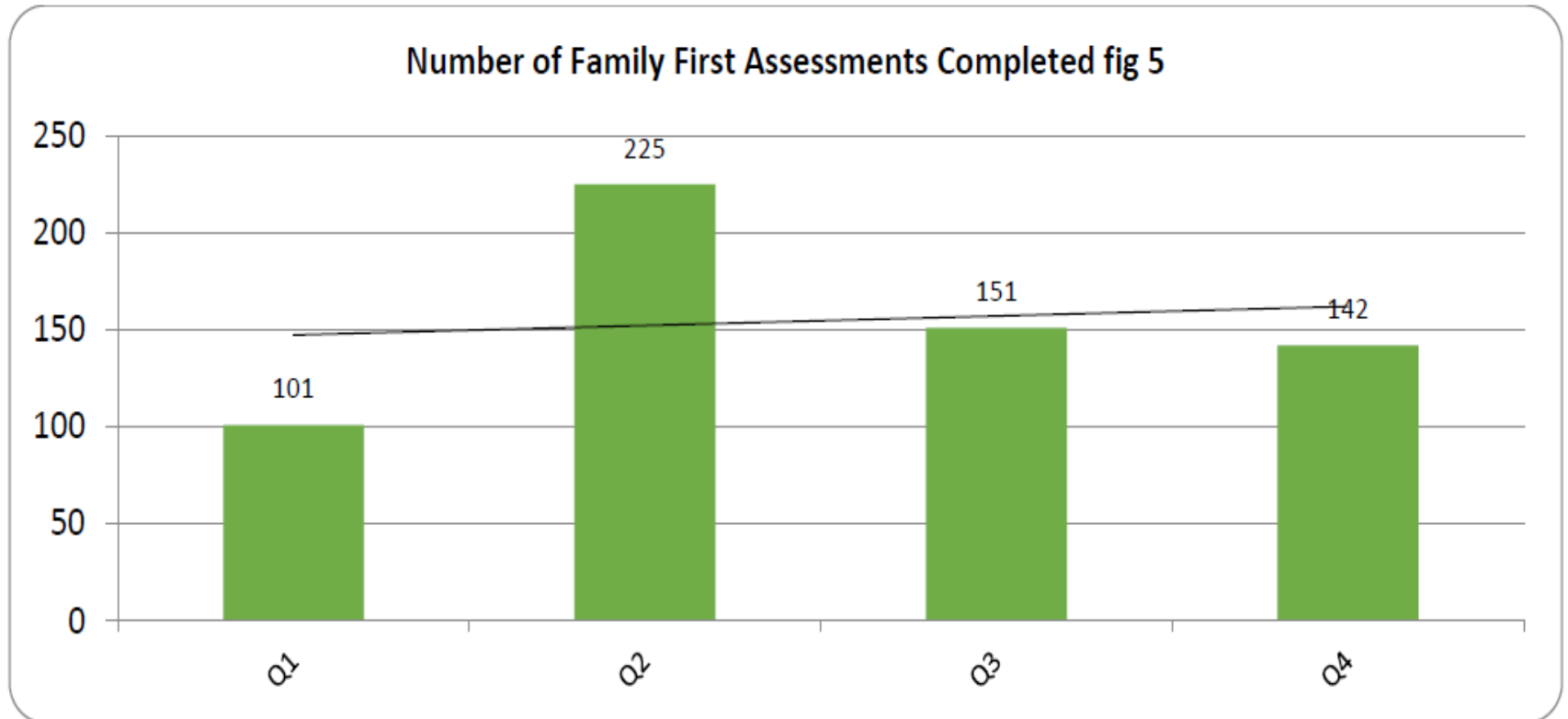
Risk factors identified for families referred in ERH

Risk factors in Q4 (Jan-March 2024) - fig 2



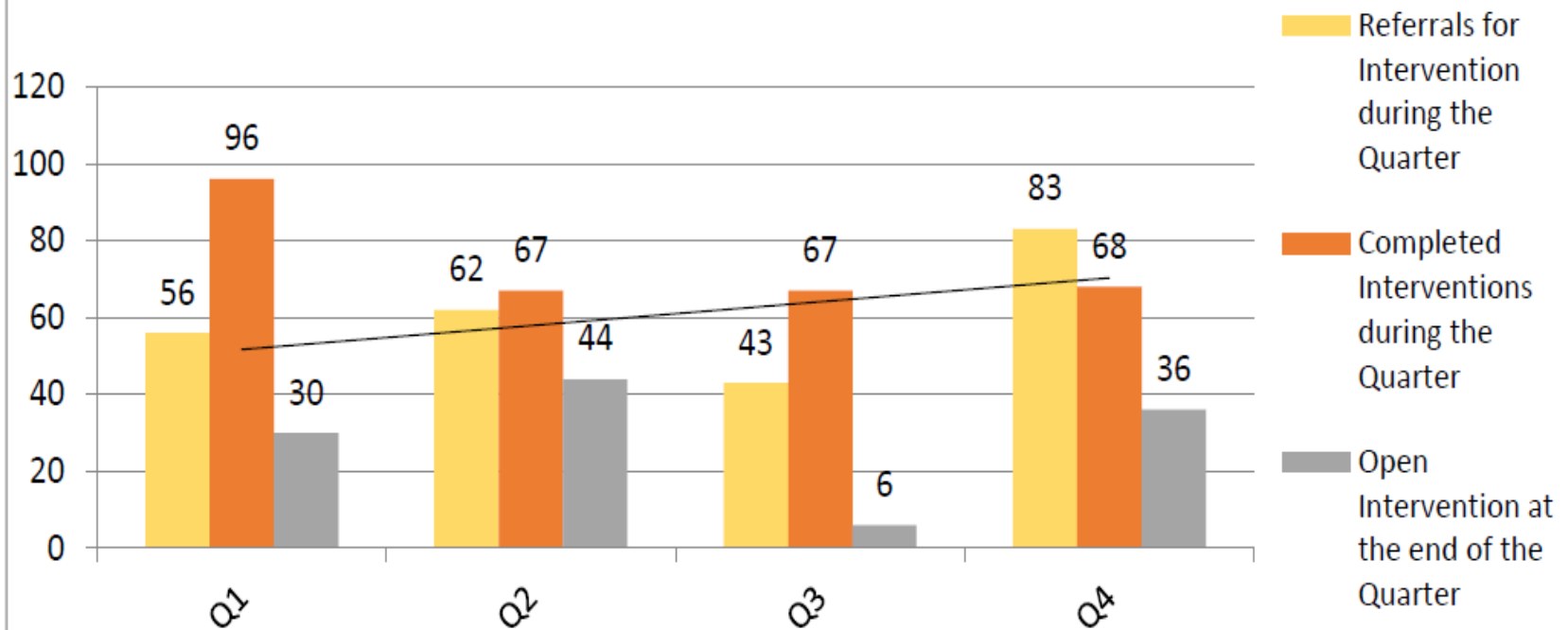
Family First Assessments

Family First Assessments

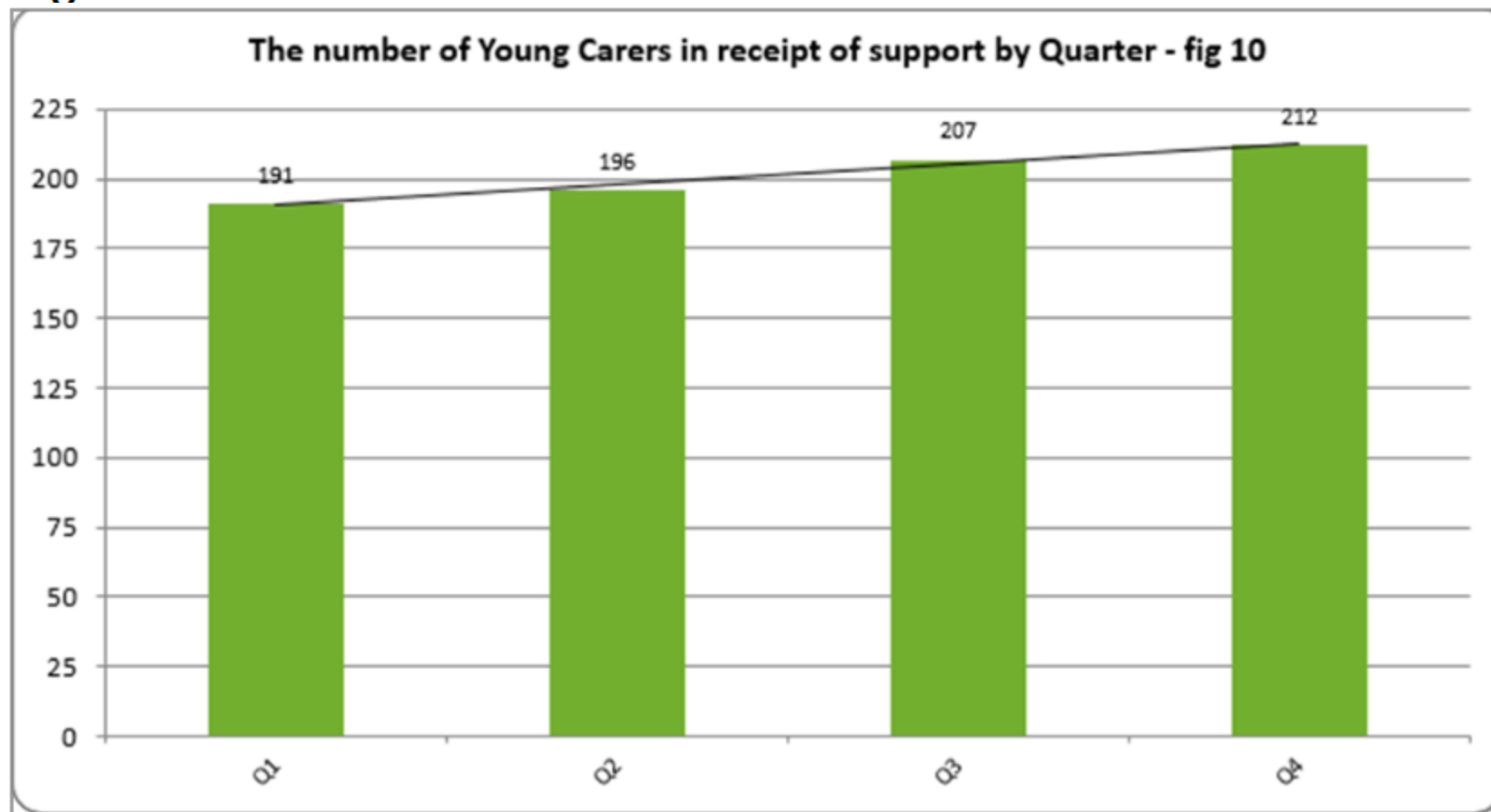


Intervention

Referrals for Intervention, Completed Interventions and Interventions Currently Underway by quarter - fig 6



Young Carers



Early Response

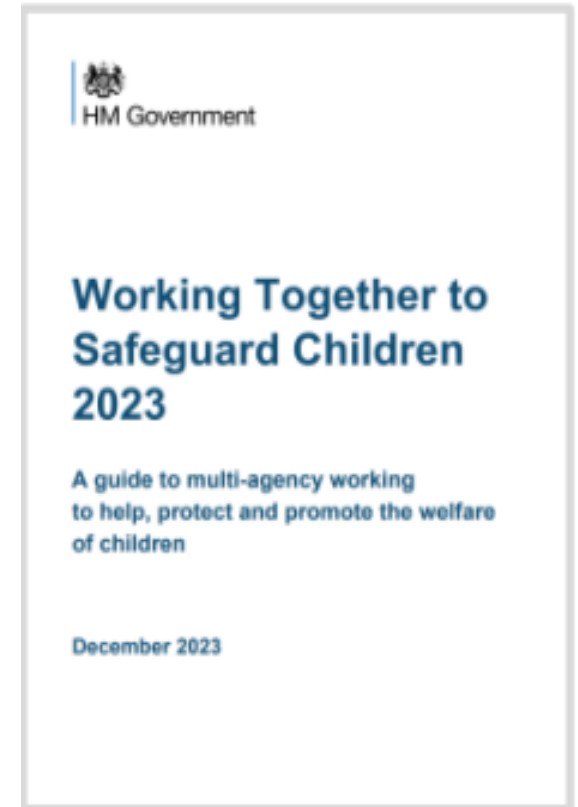
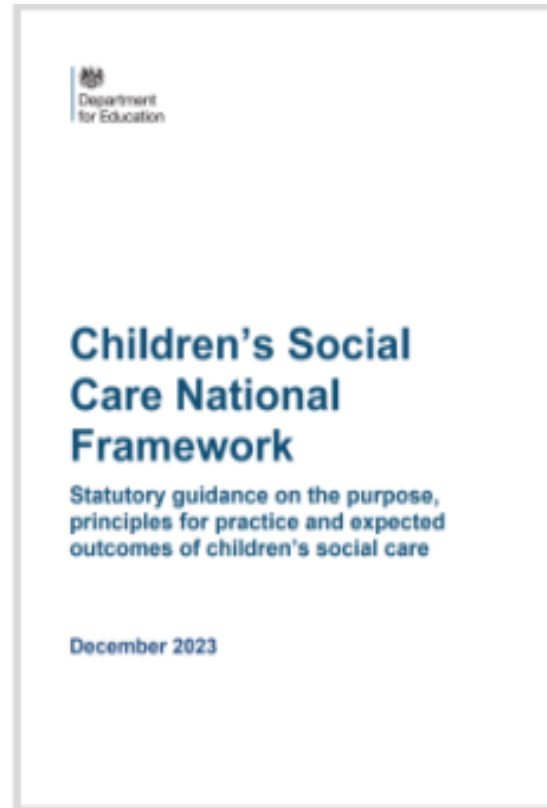
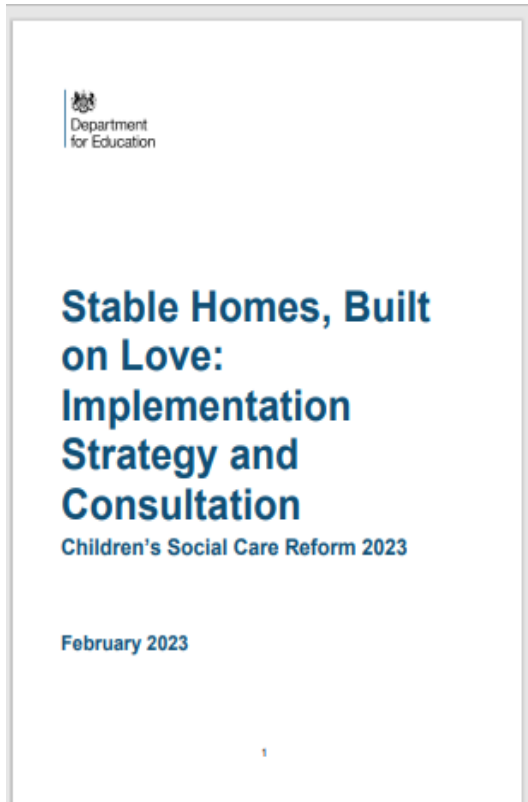
- ❑ ERH continues to explore ways of working which will best meet the needs of families earlier
- ❑ There are financial challenges which prevents this area developing further, but we also explore and learn all options to support development
- ❑ Some posts are grant funded which will bring further challenges for 2025/26
- ❑ This year we have started a Family Help Model based on new guidance

West Berkshire Children's Services introduction to The Family Help & Achievement Model of Practice



**Right Service
Right Time
Right Person
Right Place**

National Drivers for change



Our Response

Introducing Family Help and Achievement

Relationship-based approach
Focus on building upon strengths and achievements.
Strengthening partnerships.
Complex needs – safely managing and reducing risk.
Collaborative Planning



WBC celebrate the introduction of the FHA and its Child and Family Achievements Plans and meetings that align, complement and enhance our responses to children in need. This innovative and transformational model, reflects our commitment to growth and positive development.



In addition, we celebrate the introduction of the 'Spectrum of Children in Need' that reflects our enhanced understanding of this wide and varied cohort of children who require the right level of support at the right time supported by the right people. People include the child, family, wider family, professionals, friends, neighbours, communities, and embraces the opportunity to ensure children have stable, supportive relationships and lifelong links (SHBOL 2023). Our overarching aim is to keep more families safely together



Spectrum of Need

The Spectrum of need incorporates and is an extension to West Berkshire Children and Families threshold document.

We recognise within the spectrum, 'Children in Need' as one cohort who may require different levels of support at different times.

The development of the Spectrum, is a vital element of the Family Help and Achievement (FHA) model. By streamlining practice and resource we assist fluidity of movement across the threshold in response to the changing needs of families.

Connectedly, we have structured the Contact Advice and Assessment Service and the Early Response Hub to ensure children, young people and their families keep a consistent relationship from people with different expertise whatever their level of need.

'The Right Service at the Right Time from the Right Person at the Right Place'



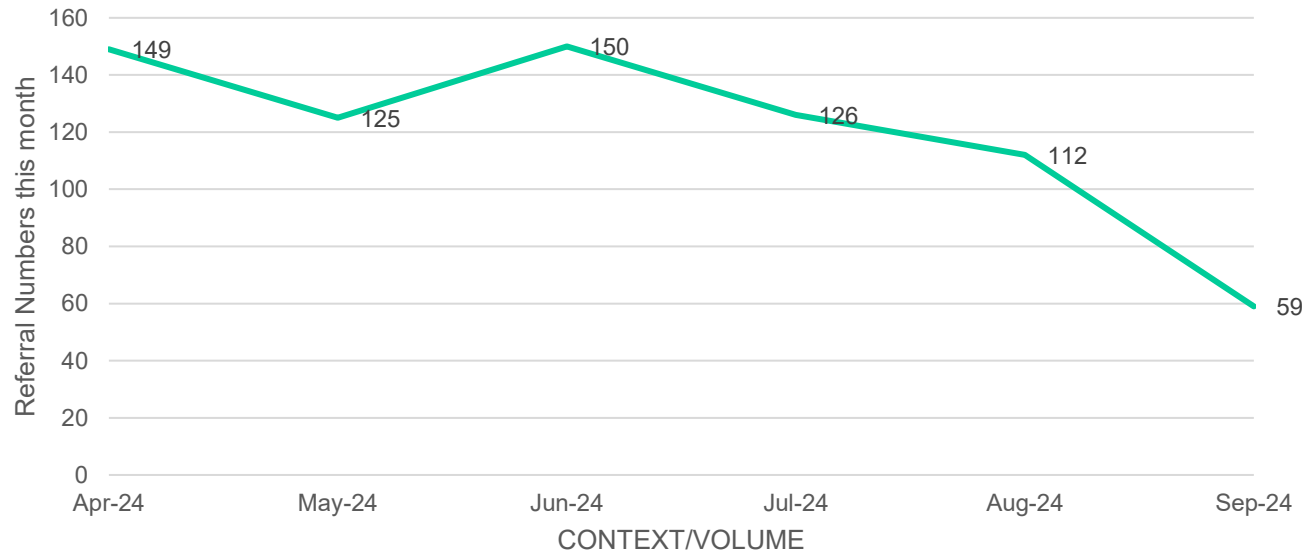
The Spectrum of Need

Level 2a – ADDITIONAL NEEDS			Level 2b – MULTIPLE NEEDS			LEVEL 3 – COMPLEX & MULTIPLE NEEDS			LEVEL 4 - ACUTE/SEVERE NEEDS			
Key Areas	5-7	8-10	Key Areas	10-12	13-15	Key Areas	15-16	17-18	19-20	Key Areas	20-22	23-25
Development of baby, child or young person Health	Standard healthcare access	Minor health concerns	Development of baby, child or young person Health	Fewer healthcare engagements	Ongoing health concerns	Development of Baby, Child or Young Person: Health	Appropriate use of health services, engagement with universal services	Child has some chronic/recurring health problems, limited diet/access to food	Serious delay in achieving milestones, unexplained accidents, missed health appointments, unexplained weight gain/loss	Development of baby, child or young person Health	Appropriate use of health services, Engaged with universal services	Disclosure of abuse, severe/chronic health problems, failure to thrive, lack of food, non-accidental injury, FGM
Education and Learning	Regular school attendance	Some learning difficulties	Education and Learning	Some school engagement	Continued learning difficulties	Education and Learning	Good liaison between family and school, engages well in after-school activities	Risk of exclusion, not in education, employment or training post 16	Chronic non-attendance, regular underachievement, permanent exclusion	Education and Learning	Good liaison with family and school, Positive school attendance, Engages in after-school/community activities	Physical/learning disability, out of school/no school, complex learning needs
Emotional and Behavioural Development	Emotional stability	Minor behavioural concerns	Emotional and Behavioural Development	Some emotional challenges	Increasing behavioural concerns	Emotional and Behavioural Development	Appropriate use of emotional health services, engagement with EMRAC	Difficulty coping with emotions, low self-esteem, moderate risk of substance misuse	Mental health issues, self-harming, discrimination, high risk of substance misuse	Emotional and Behavioural Development	Appropriate emotional health services, Referred to Prevent/Channel, known to EMRAC	Acute mental health problems, dangerous behavior, severe challenges
Relationships	Healthy relationships	Early signs of relationship strain	Relationships	Strained relationships	Continued relationship issues	Relationships	Knowledge of/access to sexual health information, engagement with substance misuse services	Difficulty sustaining relationships, experiences persistent bullying, known association with gangs	Poor peer relationships, at risk of exploitation/radicalisation, inconsistent relationships with carers	Relationships	Knowledge/access to sexual health, Engagement with Youth Offending Team	Being exploited, attachment problems, forced marriage, abusive relationship
Parents and Carers	Supportive parenting	Minor parenting difficulties	Parents and Carers	Less supportive parenting	Ongoing parenting difficulties	Parents and Carers: Basic Care, Safety and Protection	Appropriate access to social care support, good attachment between parent/carer and child	Difficulty caring for previous children, inappropriate care arrangements, false/non-compliance with services	Chronic or acute neglect, history of child protection concerns, multiple carers	Parents and Carers	Appropriate access to support, Engagement with voluntary services, Evidence of good attachment with parent/carer	Disclosure of abuse, serious injury, neglect, parents unable to provide good parenting, severe crime
Family History and Functioning	Supportive family	Early signs of family dysfunction	Family History and Functioning	Less supportive family	Continued family dysfunction	Family and Environment Factors: Family History and Functioning	Regular supportive help from extended family, engagement with domestic abuse support services	Family socially isolated, pre-birth assessment where a history of child protection concerns	Domestic abuse, serious physical and mental health difficulties, risk of relationship breakdown leading to need for child to be looked after outside of family network	Family History and Functioning	Regular supportive help, Alternative caring adult, Engagement with domestic abuse services	Persistent domestic abuse, destructive involvement, family criminal activity, chronic substance misuse
Housing and Finance	Stable housing	Early signs of financial strain	Housing and Finance	Less stable housing	Continued financial difficulties					Housing and Finance	Extended family housing support, Accessing welfare rights advice	Unsafe home environment, extreme poverty/debt



Impact

Decreases in numbers of children progressing for short term statutory assessment

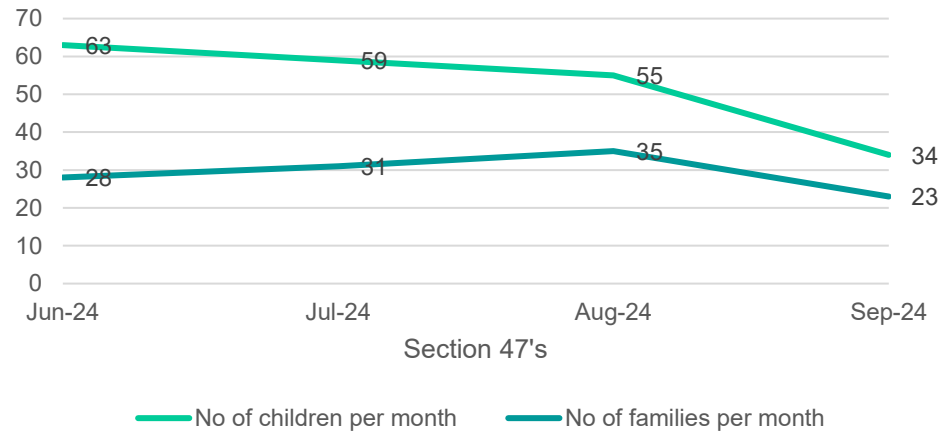


‘The Right Service at the Right Time from the Right Person at the Right Place’



Impact

'Reduction in No of children per month', 'No of families per month' by 'Section 47's'



'The Right Service at the Right Time from the Right Person at the Right Place'



Contacts into Children's Services that progress for long term statutory input

Number of contacts received				
	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
	865	1129	845	966

Number of children progressing for longer term statutory input				
	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
	11	33	16	10

What families have told us

Being part of the solution rather than the problem helped us as a family to move forward

The W family told us- 'how much they appreciated the positivity of their family help and achievement meetings which helped them realise how far they had come and not just focused on the negatives'

The Right Service at the Right Time from the Right Person at the Right Place'



Next Steps – Family Hubs – what can they bring to the table?



Family Hubs

- ❑ West Berkshire has 3 Family Hub areas (East, West, Central) providing community access to universal family activities, targeted group and one to one support and a diverse range of offer which recognises the importance of strong resilient families.
 - **Central Family Hub (Thatcham)** which is a Council Hub
 - **East Family Hub (Calcot)** which is a Council Hub
 - **West Family Hub (Newbury)** which is delivered by Victoria Park Nursery School (commissioned)
 - **Hungerford Family Hub** which is a satellite of West Family Hub providing additional support to Hungerford and the West areas such as Lambourn
- ❑ The focus on support for the adults - who are at the heart of stable family life - prevents escalation for many families to statutory services.
- ❑ Partnership work, good knowledge of local resources and excellent relationships all underpin the family hub ethos.
- ❑ There is a focused commitment to “Start for Life” principles acknowledging in our offer the importance of the First 1001 Days.
- ❑ Resourceful income generation and grant applications have secured impactful and diverse opportunities for families. Financial resources are well managed, offer value for money and prudent expenditure on what works and makes the biggest difference and impact for families at this crucial time.
- ❑ West Berkshire Supporting Families Project and Early Response Hub (ERH) work in partnership with Family Hubs to create more seamless early intervention and prevention opportunities for families in need.
- ❑ Link Family Support Worker is based across ERH and Family Hubs 2.5 days per week to further facilitate this.



Family Hub Offer

- ❑ Targeted 1-2-1 support for families – in the home, community and Family Hubs.
- ❑ Regular open access early intervention sessions for families – e.g. child development, ante-natal and post-natal support, sleep, feeding, play.
- ❑ Regular targeted intervention sessions for families – e.g. SEND drop ins, First Aid, Twins/Multiples, Breastfeeding support, Speech and language.
- ❑ Delivery of Community Learning/Adult education parenting courses – e.g. Self-esteem and assertiveness, Time Out for parents/carers (anger management), Cooking and Nutrition, Transition to School.
- ❑ Partner organisation facilitated sessions – e.g. Health Visitor baby clinic, Midwifery clinic, Time to Talk therapy for children and young people.



Partner Engagement

Breastfeeding Support Service

Funded by Public Health and delivered by FSW in collaboration with NHS infant feeding team.

NHS provider Services

Midwifery and Health visiting service operating from Thatcham Hub. Ante natal courses run in collaboration. Health Bus visits Hungerford and Hub FSW work alongside in outreach capacity. Calcot Health Visiting Services operate from Village Hall due to space in Hub.

Community Learning

All parenting courses run by Family Hubs are accredited adult education courses and funded by Community Learning

Thatcham Relief in Need

Charity providing support to families in need to be based at Thatcham Hub from September- positive opportunity to create partnership work arrangement and trial this approach in our Hubs.

Young Carers Service

Scoping activity underway to explore introduction of Young Carers Groups in Thatcham and Calcot Family Hubs. For both younger and older cohorts.

Emotional Health Academy

EHA will now contribute to all Hub run sessions and courses .

Targeted work and impact



- ❑ There are currently 137 open families being supported by Family Support workers in the Family Hubs. (Oct 2024)
- ❑ Family Hubs work collaboratively with the Early Response Hub (ERH)
 - ❑ Family Hubs are working with 38 families on plans for child protection and children in need who live in their reach area.
 - ❑ Family Hubs attend key professional's meetings such as Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences, Core Group meetings, Looked After Children Reviews, Team Around the Child and Professionals meetings.
- ❑ All children and families referred directly to the Family Hubs are contacted and an offer of support made.
- ❑ The Family Hubs use “My Family Plan”. Currently there are 25 families with an active MFP being led by Family Hub staff.
- ❑ Evidence suggests that Hubs are positively influencing West Berkshire breastfeeding rates, childcare entitlement take up amongst disadvantaged 2 year olds, engagement with fathers.

Family Hub User Voice

Feedback from users of Family Hubs is overwhelmingly positive. Parenting courses, SEND drop ins, Dads groups, targeted intervention sessions are well attended by families in need who then go on to access Hub support on a regular basis.

- *I have had lots of 1-1 support over the years and know I can come in at any time when I have issues or am in trouble. Great place to come and get support, also had lots of phone support and home visits, helped with housing, finances, employment, 2yr funding, nursery places, debt, relationships, cooking – weaning, behaviour.*
- *Made me build as an individual and as a mum. Help my son have the best mum he can and the right way to development as a family... Made me feel wanted and seen.*
- *It has allowed me a better understanding around parenting, as I have been accessing the Time Out For Parents courses with my family support worker, and I am keen to learn more where possible. Because of the knowledge I have now, that will have an impact on my family life for a more positive result*
 - *We now live in a secure home. My confidence is growing. My debts are getting sorted.*
 - *Now I help myself and family to a calm & happier family life.*

Thank you

Any Questions



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EARLY
INTERVENTION
FOUNDATION

THE COST OF LATE INTERVENTION: EIF ANALYSIS 2016

HAROON CHOWDRY AND PETER FITZSIMONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Summary	7
Introduction	9
Methods and data sources	9
Analysis: The cost of late intervention	11
How has our estimate changed since last year?	15
How does spending on late intervention vary across England?	17
Conclusion	20

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report and the technical analysis underpinning it have both benefited from a range of helpful comments and contributions. Nevertheless, the analysis and findings presented in this report are the views of the authors only.

The aim of this report is to support policy-makers, practitioners and commissioners to make informed choices. We have reviewed data from authoritative sources but this analysis must be seen as supplement to, rather than a substitute for, professional judgement. The What Works Network is not responsible for, and cannot guarantee the accuracy of, any analysis produced or cited herein.

Foreword

Early intervention is about identifying and responding to signals of risk for children and families before problems become more difficult to reverse, from conception to young adulthood. Early intervention approaches which have strong evidence of impact have the potential to reduce the likelihood of poor long-term outcomes for children. This not only benefits children now and in the future, but also wider society and the economy.

The Cost of Late Intervention: EIF analysis 2016 updates the analysis we published last year.¹ Its focus is on the immediate and short-run fiscal costs of what we call 'late intervention': the acute, statutory and essential benefits and services that are required when children and young people experience significant difficulties in life, many of which might have been prevented.

The headline is that late intervention continues to be expensive. In England and Wales, we spend nearly £17 billion per year – nearly £300 per person – on the damaging problems that affect children and young people such as domestic violence and abuse, child neglect and maltreatment, mental health problems, youth crime and exclusion from education and the labour market. While this figure is substantial, it is only the immediate fiscal so does not capture any lasting effects into adult life and sometimes into the next generation, nor the wider social and economic costs.

While the estimated total cost remains unchanged, our latest analysis shows that its profile has changed. For example, we now estimate that a fiscal cost of £5.2 billion is associated with cases of domestic violence and abuse, driven by a 6 per cent increase in recorded cases. However, the cost of criminal justice for children and young people is lower, driven by reductions in the youth justice system caseload and the number of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour. Better economic conditions and lower unemployment rates have in part led to an estimated £1 billion reduction in the amount spent on benefits for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

Not *all* expenditure on late intervention can be prevented. For some children and young people, periods in residential care or receiving specialist treatment for acute mental health problems will be the best solution available. But many of these children and young people might have had a different journey if they and their families had received effective help at an earlier time.

¹ See: <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/spending-on-late-intervention-how-we-can-do-better-for-less/>.

This report also examines where the cost late intervention currently falls. The £17 billion is spread across different public agencies at national and local level, from local authorities, the NHS, schools, welfare, police to the criminal justice system. Local authorities bear the largest share at £6.4 billion, followed by the NHS with £3.7 billion and the Department for Work and Pensions with £2.7 billion.

The amount spent on late intervention varies significantly across England and Wales. Using spend per person in each local authority as a basis for comparison, we find that this is £298 on average but can be as low as £164 or as high as £531, with higher levels of late intervention spending more likely to be found in areas with higher levels of deprivation. Rural areas are more likely to show lower levels of both late intervention spend and deprivation, while urban areas are more likely to show higher levels of both.

While we do not think that the demand for late intervention spend can ever be brought down to zero, nor should it be, this data shows that there is more work to do to provide effective early intervention to children and families who need it. We hope this analysis will prompt renewed discussions at local and national level about how agencies can work together to limit demand for high-cost, statutory responses by moving resources upstream, spotting early signs of risk in children and families, and providing effective support where and when it is needed.

If we are serious about tackling injustice and increasing social mobility for children and families, investment in effective early intervention should be targeted in particular on service areas where spending on late intervention is high. In some local areas, this analysis is catalysing a more preventative approach to commissioning services through increased local pooling of resources across agencies, integration of services and improved joint action that can result from a hard local analysis of these numbers.

Since our last report, EIF has published three major evidence reviews on key aspects of early intervention:

- *What Works to Support the Interparental Relationship and Improve Child Outcomes*² looked at a range of interventions which aim to reduce conflict and improve communication to support the co-parenting relationship and through that child outcomes.

² See <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/what-works-to-enhance-inter-parental-relationships-and-improve-outcomes-for-children-3/>.

- *Foundations for Life: What Works to Support Parent Child Interaction in the Early Years*³ assessed the strength of evidence of impact of 75 programmes to support the interaction between parents and children in the earliest years of life.
- *Social and Emotional Learning: Skills for life and work*⁴ looked at over 100 interventions to support skills for work and life for school-aged children.

As part of this work, we have examined the effectiveness and costs of early intervention approaches. Our reviews have shown that there are effective early intervention approaches available, which, if implemented well and targeted effectively, can improve the wellbeing, opportunities and life-chances of children and young people. In so doing, effective and timely early intervention can also free up space in the system, reducing the demand that we know is putting services under pressure. This illustrates the win-win that EIF is working towards: improved lives for children and young people, and a better deal for the economy, public services and the taxpayer.

Carey Oppenheim
Chief Executive, Early Intervention Foundation

³ See <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/foundations-for-life-what-works-to-support-parent-child-interaction-in-the-early-years/>.

⁴ See <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/social-and-emotional-learning-skills-for-life-and-work/>.

Summary

Headlines

Nearly £17 billion per year – equivalent to £287 per person – is spent in England and Wales by the state on the cost of late intervention. This is in line with EIF’s previous estimate, which was also just under £17 billion.

While the estimated total is as before, our latest analysis shows that the profile has changed. For example, expenditure related to domestic violence and abuse has risen, while spending on late intervention for young people not employment, education or training has fallen. There are other changes driven by movements in the underlying data or improvements to our own methodology.

Aims

- The *Cost of Late Intervention: EIF Analysis 2016* calculates how much the public sector in England and Wales spends on late intervention for children and young people, responding to the more severe problems that they experience. It updates our previous analysis from 2015.
- Knowing how much is spent on late intervention is useful because it also illustrates a *potential* ‘fiscal prize’ from early intervention – although we do not argue that *all* of the demand for late intervention can be prevented.
- Our analysis also provides transparency at a local and national level about how much is spent and by which departments or agencies. This can help stimulate co-operation and new approaches to tackle the demand for late intervention.

Definitions and methodology

- We use ‘late intervention’ as an umbrella term for a range of acute or statutory services that are required when children and young people experience significant difficulties in life, as well other support they may draw upon such as welfare benefits.
- Our analysis estimates the short-run annual cost to the taxpayer of late intervention for England and Wales. It does not capture longer-term cumulative costs which will be considerably larger; it also does not capture wider cost to individuals and society.
- We estimate how much is spent each year in England and Wales on dealing with the following issues:
 - Crime and anti-social behaviour
 - School absence and exclusion
 - Children’s social care
 - Child injuries and mental health problems
 - Youth substance misuse
 - Youth economic inactivity

- Our headline analysis presents the total cost across all of these issues in England and Wales as a whole. Supplementary analysis breaks down the total costs by area of government spending, and by English local authority.

Findings

- Nearly £17 billion per year is spent in England and Wales by the state on the cost of late intervention – in line with EIF’s previous estimate.⁵ This works out at around £287 per person.
- The largest individual costs are:
 - £5.3 billion spent on Looked After Children
 - £5.2 billion associated with cases of domestic violence and abuse
 - £2.7 billion spent on benefits for young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- The cost of late intervention is spread across different areas of the public sector, with the largest shares are borne by:
 - local authorities (£6.4 billion)
 - the NHS (£3.7 billion)
 - DWP (£2.7 billion)
- Our estimate of the cost of domestic violence and abuse is significantly higher than before, driven mainly by a 6% increase in the number of recorded cases. However, the cost of criminal justice for children and young people is lower, driven by reductions in the youth justice system caseload and the number of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- In education, the total costs of persistent absenteeism and permanent exclusions are both higher than last year’s estimate.
- Our estimate of the cost of benefits for young people who are NEET has fallen by approximately £1 billion since last year. This partly reflects employment growth and more favourable economic circumstances: the number of 18-24 year-olds who are NEET has fallen by 6%. It also reflects a methodological revision to the estimated unit fiscal cost of each individual who is NEET.
- The amount spent on late intervention varies significantly across the country. Using spend per person in each local authority as a basis for comparison, we find that this is £298 on average but can be as low as £164 or as high as £531.
- Using heat maps, we are able to show that the amount of money spent in a local authority on late intervention is, to some extent, linked to the level of deprivation in that area. There is also an urban/rural split: rural areas are more likely to show lower levels of both late intervention spend and deprivation, while urban areas are more likely to show higher levels of both.

⁵ See <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/spending-on-late-intervention-how-we-can-do-better-for-less/>.

While the total estimate is broadly unchanged, individual elements have changed due to revisions in methodology and changes in the underlying data.

Introduction

This report updates EIF's previous analysis, published in 2015, of the fiscal cost of late intervention. More specifically, we estimate how much is spent each year on the following sets of issues:

- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- School absence and exclusion
- Children's social care
- Child injuries and mental health problems
- Youth substance misuse
- Youth economic inactivity

Knowing what is spent on late intervention is useful because it illustrates a *potential* 'fiscal prize' from early intervention: if children at risk can be helped early on so that their needs do not become entrenched, then they are less likely to require statutory intervention or acute services later on – freeing up resources and reducing pressure on the system. While the services themselves are valuable and important, and it is neither desirable nor possible to completely eliminate the demand for them, the current pressures on public spending mean that it is important to manage the demand on these services as far as possible.

All of figures presented here are only the short-run annual cost, not a projected cost cumulated over years or decades. As such, they are extremely conservative estimates. However, expressing the current costs of late intervention in this form makes it more comparable to the current costs of early intervention.

As in our previous analysis, our analysis relates to England and Wales only. This is because of a lack of comparable data in other regions of the UK. Further analysis in this report examines which agencies at national and local level carry those costs, and how the cost of late intervention varies across local areas in England.

Methods and data sources

Our general approach for arriving at the annual fiscal cost of each of the issues above is to take total demand or caseloads for acute services or other late intervention – obtained from published statistics – and combine that with an estimated 'unit cost' of each case that provision. This has the advantage of being directly linked to what we know about demand for services for children and young people. Information on unit costs tends to be available at a national level only, even though the true unit cost may vary from one local area to another. Therefore, where it would lead to more robust results, we have also used published data on actual

local authority spend on particular acute services. Table 1 outlines information sources used each issue.⁶

TABLE 1. WHAT INFORMATION DOES THE EIF ESTIMATE OF LATE INTERVENTION SPEND TAKE INTO ACCOUNT?

Issue	Information used to calculate estimated fiscal cost
Crime and anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported cases of domestic violence and abuse • Reported anti-social behaviour incidents • Young people in the Youth Justice System (YJS)
School absence and exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of persistent absentees • Number of permanent school exclusions • Annual spending on Pupil Referral Units
Children’s social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual spending on Looked After Children • Number of Child Protection Plans • Number of Children in Need⁷
Child injuries and mental health problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children admitted to hospital due to injuries • Children admitted to hospital due to mental health • Children admitted to hospital due to self-harm
Youth substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people admitted to hospital due to substance misuse • Children using specialist substance misuse treatment services • Children admitted to hospital due to alcohol
Youth economic inactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-17 year-olds who are NEET⁸ • 18-24 year-olds who are NEET

It is important to note certain limitations of this analysis.

- Judgements have been made about which items to include in the analysis. Table 1 is not a list every activity that counts as late intervention, and the items in the table add up to the true amount of total spending on late intervention. A better way to think about Table 1 is that it covers key adverse outcomes or types of late intervention for which national and local data on caseloads are available, along with information on total spend or unit costs.
- The items in Table 1 provide information about *services* not *children*. Hence the data we have used will reflect local and national decisions about the availability, referral and resourcing of acute services, as well as the broader fiscal climate. Because these data can reflect other factors, they alone cannot be used to make statements about the underlying *need* for late intervention or the underlying *well-being* of the children and families.

⁶ More detail on the costing methodology is available in a separate technical report. See <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/the-cost-of-late-intervention-eif-analysis-2016>

⁷ Excluding cases where the need is classified as child or parental disability.

⁸ Not in education, employment or training.

Analysis: The cost of late intervention

Table 2 shows the scale of each issue across England and Wales as a whole, along with our estimate of the associated late intervention cost. These figures are based on the latest available year (rather than one specific year), which varies for each cost item.

TABLE 2. COSTS OF LATE INTERVENTION BY COST ITEM, ENGLAND AND WALES ONLY (£M, 2016–17 PRICES)

Cost item	Recorded cases	Annual spend (£m, 2016–17 prices)
Domestic violence and abuse cases	943,628	£5,230
Anti-social behaviour incidents	1,925,952	£701
Young people in the YJS	37,946	£342
Persistent absentees	256,632	£484
Permanent school exclusions	5,029	£442
Looked After Children	75,150	£5,309
Child Protection Plans	52,624	£294
Children in Need	355,328	£578
Child injury hospital admissions	114,475	£309
Child mental health hospital admissions	1,982,660	£433
Child self-harm hospital admissions	10,240	£32
Youth substance misuse hospital admissions	14,386	£8
Children in specialist substance misuse services	19,130	£411
Child alcohol hospital admissions	24,159	£24
16-17 year-olds who are NEET	13,736	£27
18-24 year-olds who are NEET	42,940	£2,640
Total		£16,584⁹

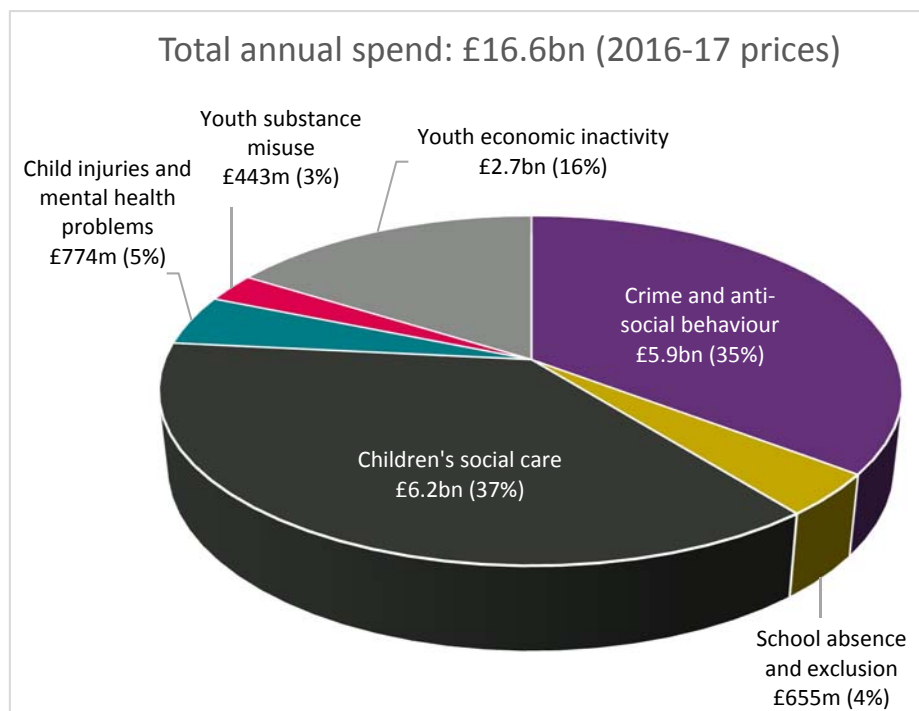
⁹ Note that the total presented here does not equal the sum of the constituent costs. This is because some cost items overlap – for example, one part of the cost of domestic violence and abuse is an associated cost of children’s social care services, which is included elsewhere in the analysis. This overlap is therefore subtracted from the total in order to avoid double counting.

Overall, we estimate that £16.6 billion is spent by the public sector on the costs of late intervention. This works out to around £287 per person in England and Wales. The largest individual costs are:

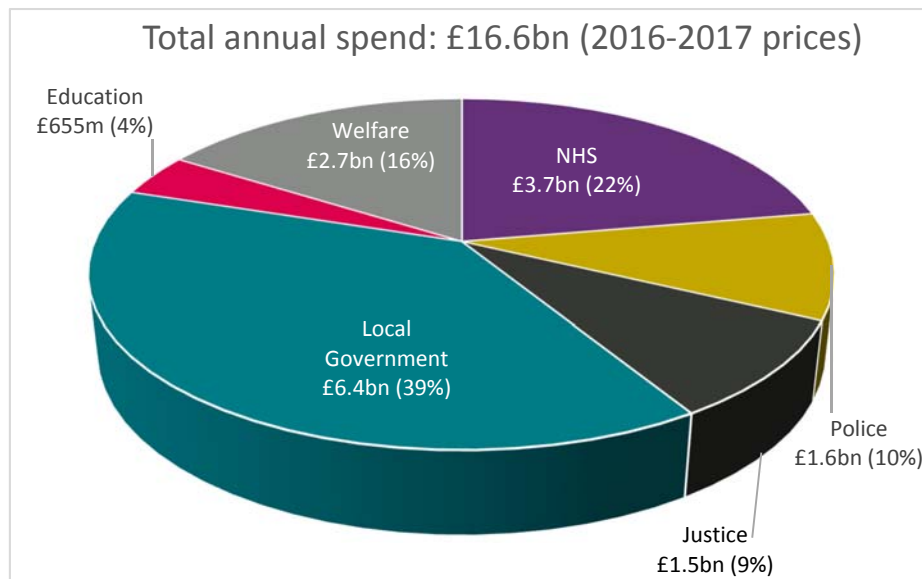
- £5.3 billion spent on Looked After Children
- £5.2 billion associated with cases of domestic violence and abuse
- £2.6 billion spent on benefits for 18-24 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Figure 1 provides a higher level summary by aggregating the cost items under broader headings reflecting a particular theme. This reveals that late intervention associated with crime and anti-social behaviour accounts for just over a third of the total amount, as does spending in the area of children's social care.

FIGURE 1. LATE INTERVENTION SPEND ON EACH SOCIAL ISSUE



Given the range of services involved, it is clear that the costs of late intervention will fall across different parts of the public sector. Figure 2 sheds light on this by splitting up the £16.6 billion according to the spending department or government agency that bears the cost.

FIGURE 2. LATE INTERVENTION SPEND BY BUDGET AREA

The local government share is the largest, reflecting the costs of children's social care, most notably the £5.3 billion per year spent on Looked After Children. The local government share also includes a small share of the costs of domestic violence and abuse and managing young offenders. To explore this in more detail, Table 3 overleaf breaks down the £16.6 billion both by cost item *and* budget area simultaneously. Looking at the first line the table reveals that the total estimated fiscal cost of domestic violence and abuse (£5.2 billion per year) is comprised of:

- £2.5 billion incurred by the NHS
- £879 million incurred by the police
- £1.2 billion incurred by the criminal justice system
- £642 million incurred by local authorities

Taking another example, the total fiscal cost of dealing with persistent absenteeism in schools (£484 million per year) is comprised of:

- £17 million incurred by the NHS
- £68 million incurred the police
- £68 million incurred the criminal justice system
- £105 million incurred by local authorities
- £226 million incurred by the education system

TABLE 3. LATE INTERVENTION COSTS BY COST ITEM AND BUDGET AREA (£M, 2016-17 PRICES)

	NHS	Police	Justice	Local Government	Education	Welfare	Total
Domestic violence and abuse cases	2,479	879	1,230	642	-	-	5,230
Anti-social behaviour incidents	-	701	-	-	-	-	701
Young people in the YJS	1	44	280	17	-	-	342
Persistent absentees	17	68	68	105	226	-	484
Permanent school exclusions	-	3	3	6	429	-	442
Looked After Children	-	-	-	5,309	-	-	5,309
Child Protection Plans	-	-	-	294	-	-	294
Children in Need	-	-	-	578	-	-	578
Child injury hospital admissions	309	-	-	-	-	-	309
Child mental health hospital admissions	433	-	-	-	-	-	433
Child self-harm hospital admissions	32	-	-	-	-	-	32
Youth substance misuse hospital admissions	8	-	-	-	-	-	8
Children in specialist substance misuse services	411	-	-	-	-	-	411
Child alcohol hospital admissions	24	-	-	-	-	-	24
16-18 year-olds who are NEET	-	-	-	-	-	27	27
18-24 year-olds who are NEET	-	-	-	-	-	2,640	2,640
<i>Less double-counting of costs</i>	-17	-71	-71	-520	-	-	-679
Net total	3,697	1,624	1,510	6,431	655	2,667	16,584

Note: Numbers do not add up exactly due to rounding. See separate technical report for full explanation of methods, calculations and treatment of double-counting – available at <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/the-cost-of-late-intervention-eif-analysis-2016>

How has our estimate changed since last year?

Our total national estimate of spending on late intervention remains broadly unchanged from last year – approximately £17 billion per year. However, there have been changes for the individual items that make up this cost, meaning that the profile of the total amount has changed.¹⁰

These changes have occurred for a range of reasons:

- A change in the number of cases recorded for a particular item
- A change in the estimated unit cost for that item
- Improvements to our methodology.¹¹

The supplementary technical report explains in full how each individual cost item was calculated, which data was used, and how this year's calculation differs from last year's in cases where the available data has changed or the methodology has been improved.

Note that our estimate of the cost of benefits for 18-24 year-olds who are NEET has fallen by approximately £1 billion since last year. This partly reflects more favourable economic circumstances and employment growth, with the number of 18-24 year old NEETs 6% lower than in our 2015 analysis. Our estimate also reflects a revision in the estimated welfare benefit cost of an 18-24 year-old who is NEET, based on the latest version of the New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database.

Table 1 shows how the individual estimated cost items have changed since the previous analysis. For each cost item, it shows what happened to the number of cases recorded, and how the estimated unit cost has changed. Our new estimate of the cost of domestic violence and abuse is significantly higher than before, driven mainly by a 6% increase in the number of recorded cases.¹² However the latest data also show noticeable falls in the number of youth justice system caseloads recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour.

While there has been a 20% fall in the number of pupils recorded as persistently absent from school, the total cost of this has increased due to increases in the estimated unit cost. Meanwhile the number of permanently excluded children has increased, as has spending on Pupil Referral Units.

Looking at children's social care, caseloads have generally risen slightly since last year, and the estimated unit cost for a Looked After Child has also increased.

¹⁰ We note that our estimate is broadly unchanged from last year in cash terms. Taking into account inflation since 2014–5, it is equivalent to a real-terms reduction of 1.4%.

¹¹ Changes to our methodology can reflect the following: some data sources no longer being available; some new data sources available, feedback from the consultation on the previous report, and updated advice in the New Economy Manchester unit costing database.

¹² The methodology for this has also been revised slightly – see separate technical report for more details.

Note that our estimate of the cost of benefits for 18-24 year-olds who are NEET has fallen by approximately £1 billion since last year. This partly reflects more favourable economic circumstances and employment growth, with the number of 18-24 year old NEETs 6% lower than in our 2015 analysis. Our estimate also reflects a revision in the estimated welfare benefit cost of an 18-24 year- old who is NEET, based on the latest version of the New Economy Manchester Unit Cost Database.¹³

TABLE 1. CHANGE IN ESTIMATED COST OF EACH ITEM OF LATE INTERVENTION

Cost item	EIF 2015 estimate (£m, 2014–15 prices)	EIF 2016 estimate (£m, 2016–17 prices)	Change in number of cases	Change in estimate of unit cost
Domestic violence and abuse cases	£4,060	£5,230	+6%	N/A
Anti-social behaviour incidents	£960	£701	-28.9%	+3.1%
Young people in the YJS	£474	£342	-28.5%	+1.1%
Persistent absentees	£420	£484	-19.8%	+43.1%
Permanent school exclusions	£450	£442	+6.2%	+105.1%
Looked After Children	£5,150	£5,309	+3.2%	+8.8%
Child Protection Plans	£280	£294	+2.3%	+1.1%
Children in Need	£570	£578	-0.5%	+1.1%
Child injury hospital admissions	£140	£309	+7.8%	-4.7%
Child mental health hospital admissions	£440	£433	-2.2%	+1.4%
Child self-harm hospital admissions	£40	£32	-18.0%	+6.0%
Youth substance misuse hospital admissions	£3	£8	+200.8%	-11.8%
Children in specialist substance misuse services	£440	£411	+4.7%	-10.7%
Child alcohol hospital admissions	£9	£24	+170.6%	+1.1%
16-18 year old NEETs	£30	£27	-11.7%	+9.6%
18-24 year old NEETs	£3,690	£2,640	-6.1%	-23.7%

Note: See separate technical report for full details of methods and data for each cost item, including changes in data and methodology where appropriate – available at <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/the-cost-of-late-intervention-eif-analysis-2016>. Where unit costs have increased by 1.1%, this reflects inflation between 2014–15 and 2016–17.

¹³ Source: <http://neweconomymanchester.com/our-work/research-evaluation-cost-benefit-analysis/cost-benefit-analysis/unit-cost-database>

How does spending on late intervention vary across England?

In this section we compare how much is spent on late intervention in different local areas.¹⁴ Since total late intervention spend in a local area will be influenced by population size, we focus here on late intervention spend per head of population as a basis for comparison.

Below, in Figure 3, we examine how late intervention spend per person varies across English local authorities. We focus on England because the same analysis is not possible for Welsh local authorities: much of the data we use is only available for Wales as a whole. Late intervention spend per person varies between a minimum of £164 and a maximum of £531. The 25th percentile is £248, meaning that in a quarter of local authorities late intervention spend per person is below that amount. The 75th percentile is £337, meaning that in a quarter of local authorities late intervention spend per person is above that amount.

FIGURE 3. LATE INTERVENTION SPEND PER PERSON (ENGLISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES)

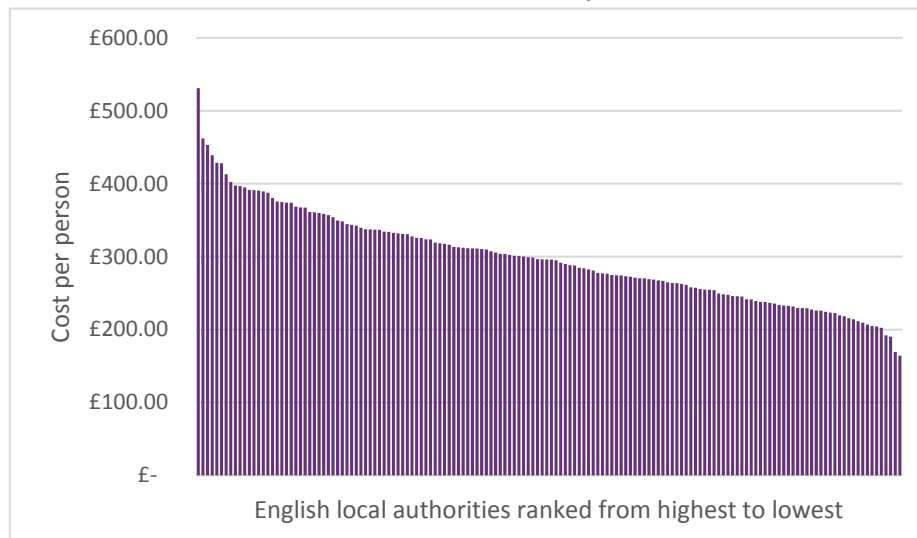


Figure 4, overleaf, plots this data on a heat map, with darker colours indicating higher levels of late intervention spend per person.¹⁵ By way of comparison, we also present alongside it a heat map of local deprivation, based on the latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation, with darker colours indicating higher levels of deprivation.¹⁶

Generally speaking, there is a tendency for the same local areas to appear in a darker colour on both maps. This confirms that the amount spent on late intervention per capita is, to some extent, linked to the level of deprivation in that area. There also appear to be some differences between urban and rural areas. Rural

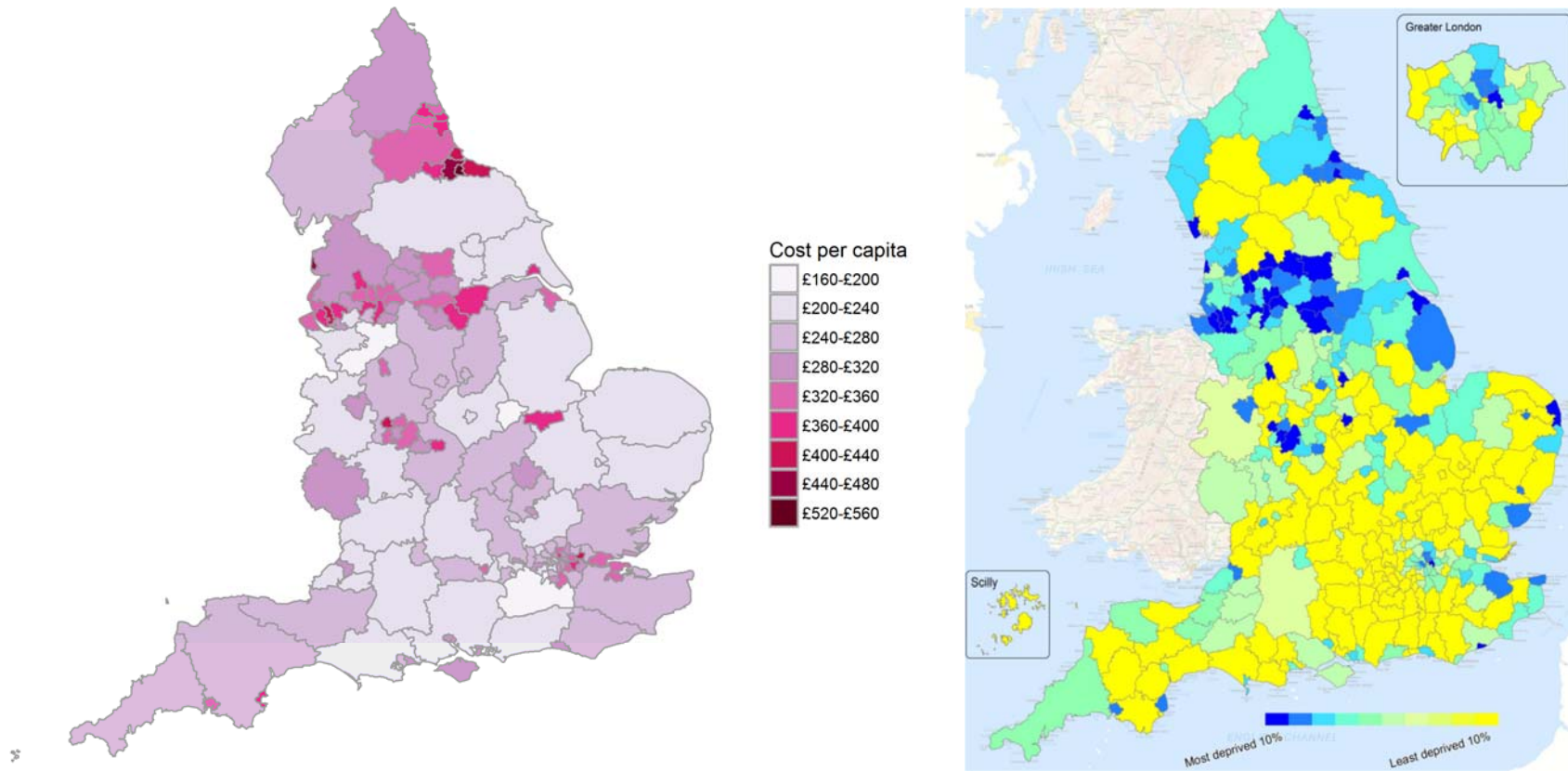
¹⁴ Note that most of the cost items in our analysis are based on a single estimated unit cost, whereas in practice unit costs may vary locally. If services and activities are provided more cheaply in one local authority compared to others, then that will not be captured by our analysis.

¹⁵ A separate heat map for London can be found in the Appendix.

¹⁶ Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

areas are more likely to show lower levels of both late intervention spend and deprivation, while urban areas are more likely to show higher levels of both.

FIGURE 4. HEAT MAPS OF LATE INTERVENTION SPEND PER PERSON AND LOCAL INDICES OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION



Source for late intervention heat map: authors' own calculations. Source for deprivation heat map: 'English indices of deprivation 2015' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>)

Conclusion

Late intervention is costly: £17 billion or £287 per man, woman and child per year across England and Wales. This is only the fiscal cost, which ignores the impact on children, families and society at large. This underlines the need for effective, targeted early intervention to address the demand for late intervention.

The total amount of money we estimate was spent by local and national agencies to deal with severe problems for children and young people has not shifted overall. However, there are significant changes for some of the constituent cost items, meaning that the profile of late intervention has changed. We note, for example, that a significant increase in recorded cases of domestic violence and abuse and a significant reduction in the number of 18-24 year-olds who are NEET have altered the profile of our new estimate of the costs of late intervention. There are other changes that have occurred to the underlying data and figures, as well as improvements to our own methodology.

As with last year's report, we show how the cost of late intervention is spread across different parts of the public sector. The largest shares are borne by local authorities (£6.4 billion), the NHS (£3.7 billion) and DWP (£2.7 billion). This analysis answers the question of who currently pays for late intervention, which is relevant to debates on public spending as well as to local and national discussions about how to stimulate investment in early intervention and prevention. As spending on late intervention varies across different issues and local areas, investment in early intervention should also be targeted in similar ways.

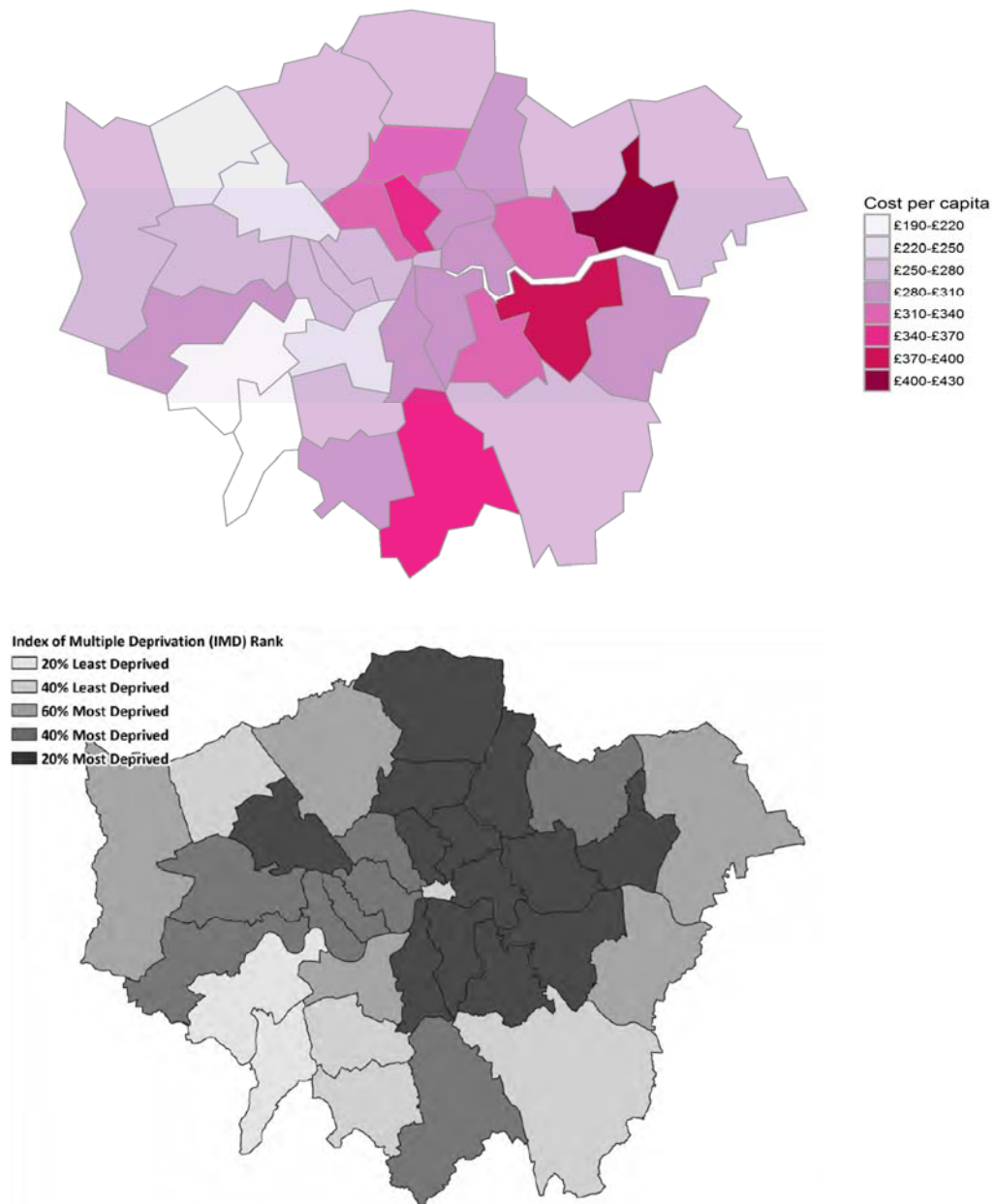
As a new feature for this year's report, we have also shown how late intervention spend (on a per-person basis) varies across local areas in England. There is significant variation across English local authorities, which appears to be linked to variation in local deprivation levels. This may not be surprising. The analysis also shows that rural areas are more likely to have lower levels of late intervention spend, while urban areas are more likely to have higher levels of both.

While we do not think that the demand for late intervention spend can ever be brought down to zero, nor should it be, this data shows that there is more work to do to provide effective early intervention to children and families who need it. We hope this analysis will prompt renewed discussions at local and national level about how agencies can work together to limit demand for high-cost, statutory responses by moving resources upstream, spotting early signs of risk in children and families, and providing effective support where and when it is needed.

APPENDIX

Figure shows a heat map of late intervention spend for London, and below it a corresponding heat map for the index of Multiple Deprivation.

Figure A.1. Heat maps of late intervention spending per person in London



Source for late intervention heat map: authors' own calculations. Source for deprivation heat map: *City of London Resident Population – Deprivation Index 2015* (<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/development-and-population-information/Documents/deprivation-index-2015.pdf>)

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Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025-26 planning

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	7 November 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Iain Cottingham
Report Author:	Joseph Holmes; Executive Director (Resources)
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4593

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the financial planning assumptions for the four years ahead over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This includes the latest assumptions on Government funding, and reform of Local Government Finance, and implications for the savings requirement in future budgets.
- 1.2 The report also includes items that are to be consulted upon over the period **11th November** to the **23rd December 2024**. These are not all of the savings proposed for the 2025-26, but are those where greater levels of consultation is required or proposed from the public.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To inform the Executive of the consultation timescales and the financial planning assumptions contained within the report

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	As detailed in the report. The Council has the lowest level of reserves of comparable authorities, and financial sustainability is a key risk for the Council. There is also a deficit on the 'High Needs Block' within the Dedicated Schools Grant. At present, this deficit (of over £9m) is kept away from impacting the general fund balance by a Government accounting treatment. This is due to end at the end of the financial year 2025-26 when this deficit would be released to the General Fund (which currently stands at only £4m).

Human Resource:	None directly identified through the report, though there could be implications following consultation and as part of any budget setting proposals			
Legal:	Legal have reviewed the paper and highlighted areas for potential consultation			
Risk Management:	Consulting upon these savings reduces the risk of challenges to implementation at the timing of the budget in February 2025.			
Property:	None identified directly – some of the savings, if implemented, could have property implications			
Policy:	None identified			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				These are included in appendix A on a case by case basis
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?				
Environmental Impact:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers

Health Impact:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers
ICT Impact:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers
Digital Services Impact:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers
Core Business:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers
Data Impact:		X		These will be updated pending consultation for the final budget papers
Consultation and Engagement:	The purpose of this paper is to consult on savings items with the public and provide an opportunity for responses to these proposals.			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Council is seeking feedback, via a consultation exercise, on specific budget proposals for the year ahead. The Medium Term Financial Planning forecasts are highlighting significant savings proposals to be required for the 2025-26 budget. With assumptions based on a broadly cash flat financing from Government, alongside continued pressures on services through rising demand, the Council will need to consider a range of options in advance of the final budget proposals to Full Council in February 2025.
- 4.2 This paper has been written **before** the Government budget announcement on the 30th October. This may change some of the assumptions included within the paper. At present, there is no certainty over future Government funding levels for the Council, nor specific funding for Public Health, the Household Support Fund and a range of other grants. The statutory override of SEND (Special educational Needs and Disabilities) deficits, which for West Berkshire stands at over £9m, is due to end at the close of the 2025-26 financial year. If this statutory override of the deficit, currently keeping the deficit outside the Council's general fund, did not continue into 2026-27, the Council would have a negative General Fund reserve and would need to immediately seek Exceptional Financial Support or the issuance of a s114 notice.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 This report highlights the financial planning assumptions for the Council over the next four years. The MTFs (Medium Term Financial Strategy) is approved by Full Council annually and is regularly refreshed with the latest assumptions that the Council is aware of. With the revenue budget papers due to Full Council at the end of February 2025, it is timely to bring to the Executive a paper setting out the latest financial forecasts as well as highlighting potential savings options for the year ahead that require consultation.

Background

5.2 Like so much of the Local Government sector, West Berkshire Council is under significant financial pressure. The Local Government Association (LGA) highlighted in its submission to the Treasury¹ in advance of the 30th October Budget the range of financial pressures, with the key points being:

- *Soaring costs in children's social care due to rising complexity and placement expenses while home-to-school transport costs for children with SEND have surged due to a 62.7 per cent rise in Education, Health and Care Plans from 2018/19 to 2023/24.*
- *Rising costs and demand in adult social care have driven a £3.7 billion (18.1 per cent) increase in budgeted spend from 2019/20 to 2024/25 while homelessness service costs have surged by £604 million (77.4 per cent) since 2019/20, driven by asylum, resettlement issues, and housing shortages and record spend on temporary accommodation.*
- *Growing pressure on councils' Dedicated Schools Grant budgets due to increased demand for services for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The 'deficit' on the provision of these services is forecast to reach £5 billion by 2025/26.*

5.3 The above are all significant pressures at West Berkshire. The current general fund reserve stands at £4m² (with a minimum level of reserves required to be £7.5m) and in recent comparative information from the Office of Local Government, the Council is shown as having the lowest levels of reserves as a percentage of any upper tier Council.



¹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/further-funding-cuts-councils-would-be-disastrous-urgent-funding-and-reform-needed>

² See item 76 of the Council papers, appendix F for how the minimum reserve is calculated
<https://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=116&MIId=7376>

- 5.4 The latest in year forecast is showing an overspend of £2m³; with the 2024-25 budget including a contribution to reserves of £1.9m, this would in effect mean that general reserves stand stationary. The 2024-25 budget was set with a savings requirement of £14.5m, which is the largest amount in the history of the Council's existence. It should be noted that progress against the delivery of these savings is highlighting approximately 86% of these as delivered or highly likely to be delivered as at Q2.
- 5.5 If the Council was to have a larger overspend than currently forecast, then it would be in the position of seeking Exceptional Financial support (EFS) from Central Government. The EFS regime saw 19 Councils request this for the last financial year and involves the Government reviewing the individual Councils and then, if satisfied, approving one off funding that Council must repay via undertaking borrowing (at a higher than usual rate previously, though this enhanced rate has been removed by the Government in October 2024) or via the sale of assets. This approach would be in advance of any discussion around issuing a 's114' report commonly reported as Council bankruptcy (though Councils who have issued a s114 report have gone on to seek EFS).
- 5.6 It is crucial that the Council explores all avenues to improve its financial resilience by increasing reserves to the minimum level set by the s151 Officer (Chief Financial Officer). The MTFS includes an assumption that reserves continue to increase over the life of the financial planning period.

³ See item 7 <https://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MIId=7832>

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025-26 planning

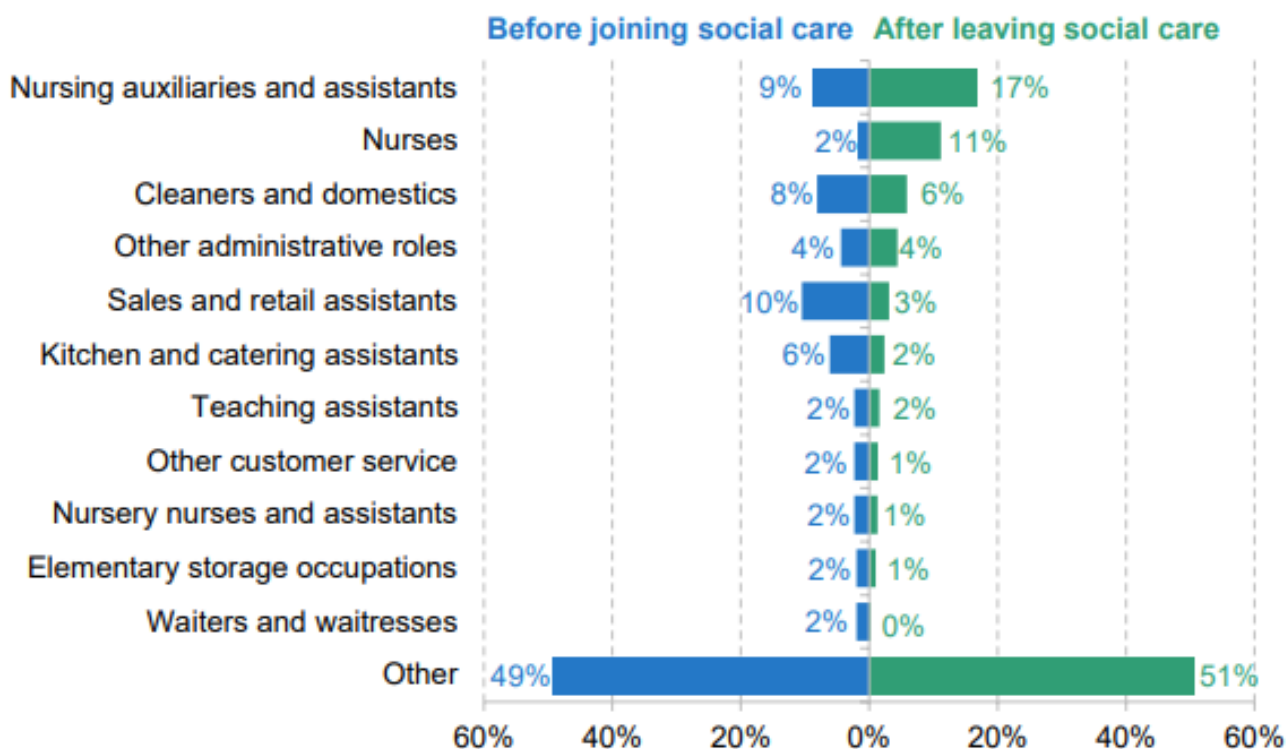
2024/25		Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
£m	Line ref		£m	£m	£m	£m
2.99%		Council Tax income	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%
2.00%		Adult Social Care Precept	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
124.2	1	Council Tax (incl. ASC)	131.2	138.6	146.3	154.6
29.9	2	Retained Business Rates	30.7	31.6	32.6	33.6
8.5	3a	Adult Social Care BCF and iBCF ringfenced funding	8.7	8.8	9.0	9.1
8.9	3b	Social Care Grant	10.9	10.9	10.9	10.9
2.6	3c	ASC Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
0.7	3d	ASC discharge fund	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
0.7	4a	New Homes Bonus	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
0.1	4b	Services Grant	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
0.6	4c	Other non-ringfenced grants	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
1.7	4d	Funding floor guarantee grant	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
-3.0	5	Collection Fund deficit (-)/ surplus	-1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
175.0	6	Funds Available	185.5	193.9	202.9	212.3
157.9	7	Base budget after adjustments	165.9	176.1	183.5	192.9
4.6	8a	Pay inflation	4.3	3.2	3.2	3.3
1.0	8b	Contract inflation and non pay inflation	2.2	1.9	2.0	2.0
12.4	8c	Modelled growth	8.0	8.5	7.0	6.0
2.2	9a	Investment	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
	9b	Commercial property loss of income	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
1.6	9c	Capital financing	2.7	1.4	1.8	2.0
-14.5	10a	Savings and income proposals identified	-4.9	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
0.0	10b	Savings and income gap	-7.2	-6.6	-3.6	-2.1
165.3	11	Annual Budget Requirement	175.6	183.5	192.9	203.1
-0.7	12	One off investment/-savings	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
164.6	13	Net Budget Requirement for Management Accounting	175.3	183.5	192.9	203.1
8.5	14	Adult Social Care BCF and iBCF ringfenced funding	8.7	8.8	9.0	9.1
173.1	15	Budget Requirement	184.0	192.3	201.9	212.3
0.0	16a	Use of Collection Fund Reserves	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1.9	16b	Increase in reserves	1.5	1.6	1.0	0.0
175.0	17	Budget Requirement after use of reserves	185.5	193.9	202.9	212.3
		<i>£10k roundings may apply</i>				

The MTFS has a variety of assumption throughout it including:

- (a) Assumed Council Tax rises of 4.99% (the current referendum levels) and that the Council tax base, number of properties in West Berkshire, increases by 400 per annum. A 1% Council Tax increase yields approximately £1.3m. The 4.99% assumption is based on current referendum levels for Council Tax.
- (b) That inflation remains around the 2% level and that impacts on staff pay awards and inflation linked contracts that the Council has.
- (c) That our fees and charges will increase by the October CPI (Consumer Price Index) figure plus 2%.
- (d) That for 2025-26 there is a roll over budget on the same cash basis as 2025-26 with some additional funding for social care in line with the uplift provided in 2024-25.
- (e) That any proposals for funding reform for the Local Government sector are broadly neutral for West Berkshire beyond 2026. In the absence of any further information, it is very difficult to put any reasonable assumptions for future years as much will be contingent on the 30th October budget (which was after the time of writing this

report), and future Government Spending Reviews. There is a significant implication for the Council if, for example, the Government implemented a hard reset of the business rates baseline; this would result in an immediate £10m+ cut to West Berkshire’s funding.

To note – the Institute of Fiscal Studies has set out changes to Government budgets per the below



- (f) That costs in social care continue to grow in, adult social care especially, line with demographic forecasts
- (g) That capital financing costs continue to grow to reflect future borrowing costs in line with the existing capital programme
- (h) That reserves grow to the minimum level as set out by the s151 officer.
- (i) That there is a collection fund deficit of £1.7m to match the figure included in the financial statements for 2023-24.

6 Implications for the 2025-26 revenue budget

6.1 The Council must ensure that it has a balanced budget for the year ahead. Given the very low levels of reserves, the general fund reserve needs to increase over the next and future financial years to over £9m to improve financial resilience for the Council.

6.2 Indicative savings and investment levels were set out to directorates in line with the paper to the Executive in July 2024, and proposals have been coming through that broadly match those assumptions for three of the four directorates.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Revenue Budget 2025-26 planning

6.3 Due to large cost demands in social care, and especially children's social care, there has been a significant increase in overall savings requirement needed for 2025-26 from an assumption of £6.5m to now an overall savings requirement of £12.1m. The main areas of increase in costs include:

- (a) Increased social care costs in the care model rising from an assumed £5m growth to £8m, including greater demand and inflation for Children with Disability placement costs
- (b) Increased Home to School Transport costs of £1.3m
- (c) Increased investment in Children's social care services of £0.5m
- (d) Increased costs of legal costs through the shared joint legal team based at Reading Council of £0.5m
- (e) Capital financing costs of £2.7m – primarily driven by the cost to the General Fund of financing the deficit on the dedicated School's Grant High Needs Block (forecast to be at £17m by the end of 2024-25)

6.4 To address the budget deficit a range of options has been pulled together and the savings proposals being worked up are summarised in the table below:

Savings area	Amount / £m	Comments
Proposals delivered through efficiency, transformation and income that do not require consultation	3.3	Will be included in the budget paper for February 2025
Proposals that require consultation with service users and the public	1.6	Included in this paper
Further savings proposals identified	5.5	Review in progress and under assessment
Revised gap – further savings required to be identified	1.7	Review in progress

Proposals

6.5 The following savings proposals are due to consulted on during the period **11th November and 23rd December**.

Proposal Number	Proposal	Description	Savings / additional income p.a. ⁴
1	Proposal for a Council Tax Initiative whereby residents in Band G and H properties are formally consulted if they would support donated to a Council led charity	This will be included as a separate question in the consultation exercise	£200k
2	ASC fees and charges	Some fees and charges are currently being charged below what it costs to provide the service.	£100k
3	ASC Resource Centres	Explore options with the external market for delivering day services	£470k
4	Adult respite in community (ARC)	To explore ways of supporting learning disability clients in a different way	£30k
5	Litter and dog bins	To offer about 1/3 of dog and litter bins by working with town and parish councils	£20k
6	Turning off streetlights in residential roads	Turning off between midnight and 5am.	£50k
7	Discontinue mobile library	To replace this service with a more effective library service option for residents in rural	£40k

⁴ To the nearest £5k

		areas e.g. deliver by the 'at home' service	
8	Reduction in winter gritting	Reducing the number of vehicles available for gritting from 8 down to 7, resulting in a reduction in length of gritting routes by 12.5%	£40k
9	Removal of Downland Sports Centre from the leisure contract	Low attendance levels compared to other sports facilities	£30k
10	General fees and charges increase of 5%	Proposed increase to fees and charges of 5% - included as a separate consultation question	£250k
		Total	£1,230k

6.6 Members of the public will be able to go onto the website <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget> and their comments recorded. The summary of these comments will be included within the budget papers that members will consider when setting the final budget in February 2025.

7 Other options considered

7.1 In the absence of the Local Government finance settlement and details for the Council's budgeted income for the year ahead, the Council has pursued a 'base case' assumption. The Council does not have other options of greater levels of funding for the sector, greater flexibility over Council Tax levels or the flexible use of Capital Receipts.

8 Conclusion

8.1 For the Executive to note the forthcoming consultation on the budget and the financial planning assumptions.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment – See attached for specific savings proposals

9.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment – this will be included in the Budget consultation exercise

Background Papers:

Budget Papers – Council February 2024

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

Name: Joseph Holmes
Job Title: Executive Director (Resources)
Tel No: 01635 519619
E-mail: joseph.holmes1@westberkshire.gov.uk

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West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details2

Section 2: Detail of proposal3

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....5

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts7

Section 4: Review.....8

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	People (ASC) Adult Social Care & Public Health
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it cost to provide the service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport fees – to increase the charge from £3.75 per trip to £5.00 per trip as per the original proposal last year • Deferred Payment set up fee – to increase this from £886 to £1200 • Deferred Payment annual fee – to increase this from £310 to £400 per annum • Full cost client administration fee – to increase this from £286 to £365 per annum.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	existing
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it cost to provide the service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport fees – to increase the charge from £3.75 per trip to £5.00 per trip as per the original proposal last year • Deferred Payment set up fee – to increase this from £886 to £1200 • Deferred Payment annual fee – to increase this from £310 to £400 per annum • Full cost client administration fee – to increase this from £286 to £365 per annum. Individuals will be required to pay more.
Completed By	Jo England

Authorised By	Paul Coe
Date of Assessment	18.10.24

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package, what services the Council does not need to provide and how the Council can charge for these services.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance</p> <p>To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it cost to provide the service.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it cost to provide the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport fees – to increase the charge from £3.75 per trip to £5.00 per trip as per the original proposal last year • Deferred Payment set up fee – to increase this from £886 to £1200 • Deferred Payment annual fee – to increase this from £310 to £400 per annum • Full cost client administration fee – to increase this from £286 to £365 per annum.

<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>The original proposal for the transport costs that were introduced last year was to charge £5 per trip but this was reduced to £3.75 per trip when it was implemented last year. The new proposed cost is still far less than the at actual cost of providing the service.</p> <p>The other 3 cost increases relate to clients who have capital over the upper capital threshold of £23250 and the proposed increases are to make these fees cost neutral.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>The alternative is to do nothing or to only increase in line with inflation.</p> <p>This would mean that we are still heavily subsidising these services.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Part of this proposal could affect any client over the age over of 18 who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care service as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p> <p>The other elements will affect mainly old clients who own properties or who have assets above the upper capital threshold of £23,250.</p>		Jo England	April 2025
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Part of this proposal could affect any client who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p> <p>The other elements will affect mainly old clients who own</p>		Jo England	April 2025

				properties or who have assets above the upper capital threshold of £23,250			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Care experienced people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Part of this proposal could affect any client who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.</p> <p>The other elements will affect mainly old clients who own properties or who have assets above the upper capital threshold of £23,250</p>		Jo England	April 2025
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	1 December 2024
Person Responsible for Review	Jo England
Authorised By	Paul Coe

West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details.....	2
Section 2: Detail of proposal	3
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics	6
Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts.....	10
Section 4: Review.....	11

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	People (ASC) Adult Social Care – Resource Centres
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	West Berkshire Council to cease to operate the Resource Centres
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New Policy
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	West Berkshire Council to cease to operate the Resource Centres: Hungerford Phoenix Greenfields. The proposal is to transfer provision to an alternative provider.
Completed By	Richard Pask
Authorised By	Maria Shepherd
Date of Assessment	21.10.24

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background

Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.

West Berkshire Council is currently reviewing the services it delivers to ensure we can deliver value for money and meet the needs of our residents. The Council currently runs three Resource Centres for adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, frailty and dementia. The centres are open five days a week, Monday to Friday. We offer a range of occupational, creative and therapeutic activities with dedicated staff.

The resource centres have always overachieved on budget, however on further review and looking at cost comparisons as well as the financial restraints within the local authority, moving these services to a 3rd party provider will provide a savings of £469K.

Greenfield House Resource Centre is a service which we expect to be in high demand in the coming years. The property is owned by the Council and has a covenant which restricts use and access to business hours. The outturn occupancy in 2023-24 was 86% and the current occupancy is 110%.

Hungerford Resource Centre is a service which there is a reducing demand despite trying to promote the Centre. The property is owned by the Council and has a covenant which restricts use to business hours. The outturn occupancy in 2023-24 was 56.1% and the current occupancy is 66%.

The Phoenix Resource Centre is a service which we expect to be in high demand in the coming years. The property is owned by the Council and has a vacant parcel of land adjoining it. This building is the newest of the three centres. The outturn occupancy in 2023-24 was 83.7% and the current occupancy is 106%.

<p style="text-align: center;">Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>To transfer provision to an alternative provider.</p> <p>This option will retain the use of the service for our residents, avoid potential staff redundancies and a potential income from the rental of the buildings.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>Finance have been heavily involved with the modelling on our actual prices vs market prices to ensure a robust set of data is utilised.</p> <p>There is a precedent in situ due to the care market strategy which mitigates the supply vs demand impact in the market.</p>

<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Do nothing – although the Resource Centres are a valuable asset for its service users and overachieve on budget, this isn't value for money with public funds.</p>
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The age range of the service users within the resource centres vary:</p> <p>Phoenix have a variety of needs including learning disability, aged from 25 – 80years old.</p> <p>Greenfields have a range of needs need from low Learning Disability to frail services users, aged 25-80 years old.</p> <p>Hungerford have low needs, aged circa 85years old.</p>	<p>The impact will be dependent on the outcome.</p> <p>This will get more clarity on the consultation.</p>	Richard Pask	Tbc
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Dependent on the outcome of the consultation</p> <p>Alternative provision – It is anticipated this option provides the least resistance and reduces the impact on</p>	<p>The impact will be dependent on the outcome.</p> <p>This will get more clarity on the consultation.</p>		

				<p>the service users, Dementia clients may not respond well to a changing environment, due to higher levels of need and varying stages of support needed for its services users.</p> <p>If no alternative providers could be found and the Council determined that it was not directly providing this service, this would increase this impact as various national studies have shown the impact that moving environments can have upon a person with Dementia, including disturbed sleeping patterns, loss of appetite, an increase in negative behavioural issues and a permanent decline in their baseline presentations.</p>			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		

Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Most of the Council's care resource staff are female so this will need to be taken into account when supporting staff who may also have carer and parental responsibilities. It is unclear what the effects will be. The impact may be different for some staff depending on which option is followed:</p> <p>According to our full list of care staff across the services, 99% of resource staff in the Council's resource centres are female (HR data) and traditionally it is more likely that these staff also have caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>The impact will be dependent on the outcome.</p> <p>This will get more clarity on the consultation.</p>		
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		

Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A		
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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This will be dependent on outcome,	The impact will be dependent on the outcome. This will get more clarity on the consultation.		
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	21.10.24
Person Responsible for Review	Richard Pask
Authorised By	Maria Shepherd.

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West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details2

Section 2: Detail of proposal3

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....5

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts7

Section 4: Review.....8

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	People (ASC) Adult Social Care & Public Health
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Adult Respite in the Community (ARC) ARC is a service that provides respite to primarily learning disability (LD) clients in the community.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The original concept was for it to be used as a short term service but it is being used as a regular service for 11 LD clients that could be supported differently. To end ARC service as this service is no longer an efficient use of resources and the service can be offered through other existing services.
Completed By	Jo England
Authorised By	Paul Coe
Date of Assessment	18.10.24

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package, what services the Council does not need to provide and how the Council can charge for these services.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance</p> <p>The Adult Respite in the Community Service (ARC) is a service that provides respite to primarily learning disability (LD) clients in the community.</p> <p>The original concept was for it to be used as a short term service but it is being used as a regular service for 11 LD clients that could be supported differently.</p> <p>To end ARC service as this service is no longer an efficient use of resources and the service can be offered through other existing services.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The Adult Respite in the Community Service (ARC) is a service that provides respite to primarily learning disability (LD) clients in the community.</p> <p>The original concept was for it to be used as a short term service but it is being used as a regular service for 11 LD clients that could be supported differently.</p> <p>To end ARC service as this service is no longer an efficient use of resources and the service can be offered through other existing services.</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service</p>	<p>There are currently 11 clients using this service and the service can be provided via other alternative services that are available.</p>

<p>users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>The alternative is to do nothing, but this is a n expensive service for a very small number of clients that could be delivered through other services.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Most of the clients using this service are between 18 to 65. Ending this service will mean a change in their service.	Ensure alternative provision is available	Jo England	April 2025
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All the clients that use this service have a learning disability. Ending this service will mean a change in their service.	Ensure alternative provision is available	Jo England	April 2025
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Care experienced people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>All the clients that use this service are Adult Social Care clients.</p> <p>Ending this service will mean a change in their service.</p>	Ensure alternative provision is available	Jo England	April 2025
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	1 December 2024
Person Responsible for Review	Jo England
Authorised By	Paul Coe

West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details2

Section 2: Detail of proposal3

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....5

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts6

Section 4: Review.....7

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Place/Environment
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Function
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am
Completed By	Peter Walker
Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	15 October 2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The Council provides much of the street lighting in West Berkshire. These streetlights are already dimmed up to 70% in residential locations to save energy. The current budget to maintain these is just over £1m.</p> <p>We have a team of officers and a Term Maintenance contract with Volker Highways Ltd in place to deliver the full range of highway maintenance services.</p> <p>In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public lighting. Councils do, however, have the power to provide lighting and once provided, have a duty of care to ensure that assets for which they retain responsibility are maintained in a safe condition.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am</p> <p>To reduce Council spending</p> <p>To tackle increasing energy costs</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that</p>	<p>Evidence from studies by UCL and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, assessing data from 62 local authorities, suggests that removing or reducing residential street lights at night, saves energy costs and reduces carbon emissions. It also found that there was no resultant increase in car collisions or crime.</p>

<p>supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>Further, a study by the universities of York and Newcastle showed that it also has benefits for nocturnal wildlife. This assists the Council meet its strategy priority of “Tackling the climate and ecological emergency”.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>No other options to reduce expenditure in this area have been identified.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Younger and older people may feel less safe at night.	There is no specific information to support which groups may perceive to be more at risk, but evidence from Essex County Council indicates that crime actually decreased and there was no increase in road collisions.	n/a	n/a
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People with disabilities may feel less safe at night.			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People from minority groups may feel less safe at night.			
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very few rural communities have Council-provided street lighting. Removing overnight lighting will aid wildlife.	There is no specific information to support which groups may perceive to be more at risk, but evidence from Essex County Council indicates that crime actually decreased and there was no increase in road collisions.	n/a	n/a
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People may feel less safe at night.			
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated.			

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	n/a
Person Responsible for Review	n/a
Authorised By	

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West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details2

Section 2: Detail of proposal3

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....7

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts10

Section 4: Review.....12

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Place Directorate and Culture and Libraries
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	To discontinue the mobile library service from 1 April 2025.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing Service
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	To retire the mobile library vehicle, which is end of life, and replace it with a range of more effective service options for residents, particularly those living in rural areas. This proposal is supported by the community needs assessment which was undertaken by an independent 3rd party in 2022.
Completed By	Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley
Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	21/10/2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background

Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.

The council is proposing to retire the mobile library vehicle, which is end of life, from 1st April 2025, and replace it with a range of more effective library service options for residents across the district.

The mobile library service has been operating in the West Berkshire area for over 40 years. It currently travels to 76 locations throughout the West Berkshire, including public service stops throughout the district, schools, nurseries, sheltered housing, a community café, and a hospital. The service provides access to 1,500 items of fiction, non-fiction, large print, spoken word CDs and a selection of children’s books. Book reservations are provided as well as general information. The frequency of mobile library visits was reduced from 3 weekly to 6 weekly in July 2024. Details of stops, dates and times can be found on the library website. www.westberks.gov.uk/libraries

Use of the mobile library service has been in decline over the last few years. Up until 2017/18 there were two mobile library vehicles in West Berkshire, but one of the outcomes of the Libraries Review at that time was to retire the larger mobile library vehicle out of the fleet of two. The smaller vehicle was retained, but the service has been subject to further decline. Statistics for 2023/24 show that many residents who use the mobile library service, also borrow books from the physical library buildings and therefore would not be severely impacted by no longer having access to this service. Only 239 residents solely used the mobile library service in 2023/24.

The total budget for the mobile and At Home service is £86,880 for 2024/25 and covers two full time posts as well as vehicle costs. This proposal to discontinue the mobile library service will generate a saving of £42,080 annually against this cost centre.

Saving on staffing: Mobile Driver Post – currently vacant	£33,020
Saving on vehicle costs	£9,060
Total saving	£42,080

If this proposal is agreed, then this annual saving of £42,080 made will be retained within the library service budget.

	<p>The Mobile Driver post will be deleted but the remaining Mobile Service Officer post will be retained to manage community outreach work through the library At Home service and pop-up libraries which will be part of the new libraries offer to residents.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The council is proposing to discontinue the mobile library service from 1st April 2025 and replace it with a range of more effective library service options for residents particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>This proposal to discontinue the mobile library service will generate a saving of £42,080 annually, out of a total budget allocation of £86,880 for the Mobile Library and At Home Service. If agreed, then this annual saving will be retained within the library service budget, and used to develop the new libraries offer.</p> <p>The following proposals are being put forward to ensure that residents are not disadvantaged by the discontinuation of the mobile library service which currently operates by visiting a set route of 76 locations over a 6-week cycle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of the library ‘At Home’ service Residents unable to visit static library buildings and therefore meeting the criteria for the library 'At Home' service, will be matched up with a DBS checked volunteer. The volunteer would then spend time getting to know the reading tastes of the person they had been linked up with to enable them to choose and deliver a selection of books to them in their own home on a regular basis every 3 weeks. <p>The delivery of this service will not be restricted to a timetable of set locations only and can be delivered anywhere in the West Berkshire district therefore increasing accessibility.</p> <p>Customers with mobility issues can receive book deliveries the service in their own homes rather than having to attempt to access the mobile library vehicle.</p> • Community outreach

	<p>Visits to settings such as pre-schools, community cafes etc. to deliver library services will increase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop-up libraries A selection of additional costed library service options for pop-up libraries will be put forward to town and parish councils for their consideration. • e-library provision Residents will continue to have the option of borrowing a vast selection of books/magazines/newspapers through the e-library service, free of charge. Help in accessing these digital services can be provided by library staff and volunteers.
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>Use of the mobile library service has been in decline over the last few years. Up until 2017/18 there were two mobile library vehicles in West Berkshire, but one of the outcomes of the Libraries Review at that time was to retire the larger mobile library vehicle out of the fleet of two. The smaller vehicle was retained, but the service has been subject to further decline. Statistics for 2023/24 show that many residents who use the mobile library service, also borrow books from the physical library buildings and therefore would not be severely impacted by no longer having access to this service. Only 239 residents solely used the mobile library service in 2023/24.</p>

Alternatives considered / rejected

Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.

The current mobile library vehicle, owned by WBC, is 18 years old. Maintenance costs are increasing year on year to keep this ageing diesel vehicle on the road.

If this service were to continue in its current form, then a new vehicle would be required. As part of reviewing this service, the council has investigated the cost of replacing the vehicle with a like for like electric version - this would cost in the region of £200k. In view of the significant investment required, combined with the diminishing usage of the service, this option has been discounted.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>A child or elderly person may find it more difficult to access a physical library service if their closest open library is further away.</p> <p>The overall strategy seeks to ensure the At Home Library Service, increased outreach provision, and the digital e-library offer with robust digital support to combat digital exclusion has a positive impact on children and elderly people, ensuring that they will not be disadvantaged by this change in service.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elderly residents will be able to receive books delivered to their own homes through the library At Home service. 2. Extra digital support will be made available to elderly residents to enable them to access e-library resources if they wish to. 3. Library provision increased through collaboration with town and parish councils to provide pop-up libraries. 4. Library provision increased through community outreach. 	<p>Elizabeth Beverley</p> <p>Libraries Manger</p>	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The expanded At Home service, will be more supportive for those residents who cannot access static library buildings because of their disability.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of the library At Home service, and the ability to reach residents with disabilities all over the district rather than being limited to a set route/timetable. 	<p>Elizabeth Beverley</p> <p>Libraries Manger</p>	

				It will not be restricted to a timetable of set locations and can be delivered anywhere in the West Berkshire district therefore increasing accessibility for residents. The At Home service will also improve access for those residents who may have struggled to access the mobile library vehicle, ensuring that they will not be disadvantaged by this change in service.	2. Extra digital support will be made available to residents with disabilities, to enable them to access e-library resources if they wish to.		
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A pregnant woman or new mother may find it more difficult to access library services if their closest open library is further away. The overall strategy seeks to ensure the At Home library service, increased outreach provision, and the digital e-library offer with robust digital support to combat digital exclusion ensures that this	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pregnant women will be eligible to receive books delivered to their own homes through the library At Home service. 2. Extra digital support will also be made available to this group, to enable them to access e-library resources if they wish to. 3. Increased community outreach work. 	Elizabeth Beverley Libraries Manger	

				group of residents will not be disadvantaged.	4. Library provision increased through collaboration with town and parish councils to provide pop-up libraries.		
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The mobile library service which visited rural settings throughout the district will cease on 31 st March 2025. It will be replaced by alternative options for library provision to ensure that residents are not disadvantaged by this change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expansion of the library At Home service, and the ability to reach residents all over the district rather than being limited to a set route/timetable. 2. Increasing library service community outreach visits to settings such as pre-schools and community cafes. 3. Working with town and parish councils to promote a costed pop-up library option in those areas of the district without library provision in their locality. 4. Promoting the e-library offer by providing support for residents to access these services and 	Elizabeth Beverley Libraries Manger	

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
					combat digital exclusion.		
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	
Person Responsible for Review	
Authorised By	

West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details2

Section 2: Detail of proposal3

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....5

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts6

Section 4: Review.....7

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Place/Environment
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Function
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	Reduce the number of winter gritting routes
Completed By	Andrew Reynolds
Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	17 October 2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>West Berkshire Council, as the highway authority, is responsible for looking after the district's 1,323 km of publicly maintainable surfaced roads during the winter period, which runs from late October to early April each year. Our winter service is delivered by the Council's Term maintenance Contractor, as part of our wider highway maintenance service.</p> <p>By law, Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980, which was modified on 31 October 2003, by Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003, highway authorities must do all that is reasonably practicable to keep the publicly maintained highway free of snow and ice. It is recognised nationally that it is not reasonable to grit every single road.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>Reduce the spend on the Council's winter service each year by £40,000.00.</p> <p>Review and revise the criteria that we use to determine which roads we should treat to align with current national guidance.</p> <p>Treatment networks would be updated to treat all routes that meet the revised criteria going forward. Overall, we expect the size of the treated network to reduce.</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that</p>	<p>Reviewing the criteria used to determine which roads would be treated would ensure decisions are aligned to current national guidance.</p> <p>The national guidance encourages local authorities to use local knowledge and evidence to define its levels of winter service through an approach which aims to minimise risk.</p>

<p>supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>Environmental benefits from a reduction in salt usage, vehicle milage and fuel usage.</p>
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>No other options to reduce expenditure in this area have been identified.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No effect anticipated			

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	n/a
Person Responsible for Review	n/a
Authorised By	

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West Berkshire Council

Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

Section 1: Summary details2

Section 2: Detail of proposal3

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics.....6

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts8

Section 4: Review.....10

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Place – Sport and Leisure
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Proposal to remove Downland Sport Centre from the Leisure Contract
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Downland Sport Centre is currently included in the Leisure Contract
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The proposal is to remove Downland Sport Centre from the Leisure Contract as it is geographically remote, with a small range of facilities and, consequently, attracts limited membership and use. If the Downland Sport Centre is removed from the contract, it is intended that outreach provision is further developed in the area to bridge the gap created and specifically target identified groups. This would ensure that the leisure offer was more focused and impactful. Potential benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue saving from reduction in management fee to Everyone Active. • Avoidance of any requirement for future capital investment. • Improved health and well-being of targeted groups within outreach programme. • More appropriate leisure provision to meet the priorities of the Leisure strategy. Whilst there is a risk that the proposal may impact negatively on the health and well-being of local residents, it is not believed that it would disproportionately impact any specific groups, in fact, it is intended that the outreach programme will be more effective as it will be developed to target identified groups. The opportunities offered by the facility are limited so the impact is not thought to be significant, and this could be mitigated, to some extent, with the delivery of an outreach programme.

Completed By	Jessica Harrison
Authorised By	
Date of Assessment	

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The Downland Sport Centre is remote and limited in its current offer for community use and, as such, attracts relatively little footfall This amounts to 0.5% of attendances across the contract. The cost to the Council is disproportionately high, when compared to the other six centres, given the attendance levels.</p> <p>If the facility was removed from the Contract, a net revenue saving of approximately £30,000 per annum could be realised together with the avoidance of additional capital investment.</p> <p>Demographically, the area of Ridgeway, in which the Centre is situated, is one of West Berkshire’s least deprived areas, although it does face a higher prevalence of poor health conditions including obesity and hypertension. It is also one of our most deprived wards for the Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards domain. It is clear that there are some health needs in this Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) relevant to physical activity. Removing the facility from the Contract could reduce opportunities for residents in the local community to access leisure facilities which could result negatively on the health of the local population. That said, the opportunities offered by the facility are limited so the impact is not thought to be significant, and this could be mitigated, to some extent, by developing an outreach programme.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>The proposal is to remove the Downland Sport Centre from the Contract. This would provide a net revenue saving of approximately £30,000 per annum and would avoid any need for future capital investment. The Downland Sports Centre does not meet the current requirements for community use, due to size, condition, accessibility, and age. Therefore, the current offer and impact is limited. The gap in Leisure centre provision could be met by developing an outreach programme.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	<p>To date, consultation has included only Everyone Active. Wider consultation with the community will give a better understanding of the impact of removing Downland Sport Centre from the Contract and whether certain groups are at risk of being disproportionately affected and what impact that might be.</p> <p>According to the Public health profile: Ridgeway Ward, West Berkshire on Leisure domain: the northern LSOA of Ridgeway scores 1 (where 10 is most deprived). <u>Health deprivation and disability</u>: scores 9 (where 10 is least deprived). The northern LSOA of Ridgeway has a <u>higher</u> than West Berks average prevalence of: Obesity, Harmful or hazardous drinking and Current smoking. There is a need for opportunities to be physically active in that area and this could be met by an outreach programme.</p> <p>Whilst removing the facility from the Contract might result in additional car usage for the local population to access leisure opportunities, the remote geographical location of the Centre means that transport by car is already essential. Future options may result in improvements to the environmental performance of the building.</p>

Alternatives considered / rejected

Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.

- Continue to operate facilities as they are.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Due to the need to travel to this venue by car we do not believe that any age group would be more disadvantaged by the removal of the leisure centres.		Jessica Harrison Principal Sport and Leisure Officer	
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Downland Sports Centre does not meet the current requirements for community use, due to size, accessibility, and age. The centre is not fully accessible; there is no lift, and no accessible change facility.		Jessica Harrison Principal Sport and Leisure Officer	
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The immediate area does face a higher prevalence of poor health conditions including obesity and hypertension. It is one of West Berkshire's most deprived wards for the Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards domain. It is clear that there are some health needs in this Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) relevant to physical activity.	Outreach work could be developed to provide opportunities for groups	Jessica Harrison Principal Sport and Leisure Officer	
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demographically, the area of Ridgeway, in which the Centre is situated, is one of West Berkshire's least deprived areas,		Jessica Harrison Principal Sport and Leisure Officer	
Displaced communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (* Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Everyone Active report on the number of care experienced people who access the leisure centres. In the July to Sep 2024, there were no known care experienced users of the centre.		Jessica Harrison Principal Sport and Leisure Officer	
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	
Person Responsible for Review	
Authorised By	

Scrutiny Commission – 26 November 2024

Item 10 – Task and Finish Group Updates

Verbal Item

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Scrutiny Commission – 26 November 2024

Item 11 – Health Scrutiny Update

Verbal Item

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Executive Schedule 2024-25

12 December 2024

EX4583	Contracts for Award Under Delegated Authority from Executive	To gain approval from Executive to delegate authority to an individual (Service Lead or Service Director) to proceed with contract awards with a value in excess of £2.5M	Liz Martin	Jeff Brooks
EX4538	Procurement activity annual report	To inform the Executive of the procurements undertaken by the Council over the past 12 months and the impact of the Social Value procurement policy.	Kate Pearson	Jeff Brooks
EX4514	Capital Financial Performance Report Q2 of 2024/25	To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Iain Cottingham
EX4598	Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report		Karl Davis	Heather Codling
EX4639	Care Leavers Annual Report		Karl Davis	Heather Codling
EX4547	Risk Management Strategy 2024 – 2027	To set out the overarching framework for managing risk at the Council, the Council's risk appetite and the risk management objectives for the next three years.	Joseph Holmes	Jeff Brooks
EX4638	Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Task and Finish Group Report on Covid and Recovery	To provide a response to the recommendations made in the report from the Scrutiny Commission Task and Finish Group on Covid and Recovery, which was presented to Members Scrutiny Commission on 24 September 2024.	Gordon Oliver	Heather Codling

Page 189

Agenda Item 12.

EX4517	Revenue Financial Performance Report Q2 of 2024/25	To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.	Melanie Ellis	Iain Cottingham
EX4541	2024/25 Performance Report Q2		Beatriz Teixeira	Jeff Brooks
13 February 2025				
EX4515	Capital Financial Performance Report Q3 of 2024/25	To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.	Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Iain Cottingham
EX4614	Update on the Implications of the Renters Reform Bill	To provide Members with an update on the progress of the Bill and to agree any resourcing implications for the Council arising from it.	Nick Caprara/Sean Murphy	Denise Gaines
EX4617	Carers Strategy	To approve the final strategy post consultation.	Hannah Cole	Patrick Clark
EX4563	Shaw House Options		Gabrielle Mancini	Nigel Foot/Vicky Poole
C4631	Revenue Budget 2025/26		Melanie Ellis	Iain Cottingham
C4632	Capital Budget 2025/26		Richard Quayle	Iain Cottingham
C4633	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26		Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Iain Cottingham
C4634	Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2025/26		Richard Quayle	Iain Cottingham
EX4545	Corporate Accommodation Review		Gabrielle Mancini	Vicky Poole
EX4518	Revenue Financial Performance Report Q3 of 2024/25	To inform Members of the latest financial performance of the Council.	Melanie Ellis	Iain Cottingham
3 April 2025				

C4536	Future of the Shared Partnership for the PPP	To fulfil the requirement of the IAA which is due to expire in January 2027, which requires the partner authorities to review the current arrangements and adopt any changes 2 years before the current arrangement expires.	Sean Murphy	Justin Pemberton
22 May 2025				
EX4542	2024/25 Performance Report Q3		Beatriz Teixeira	Jeff Brooks
TBC				
EX4446	Rights of Way Improvement Plan	To present the revised plan following public consultation.	Elaine Cox	Nigel Foot
EX4587	Gateway Plaza update		Philippa Venables	Louise Sturgess

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Scrutiny Commission Work Programme

The following items will be considered as standing items: Capital and Revenue Financial Performance Reports (Quarterly), and Performance Report (Annually)

Last Updated:
15/11/2024

Item	Scrutiny Theme	Purpose	Lead Officer	Portfolio Holder/ Lead Member	Pre or post decision?
26 November 2024					
Response to Faraday Road Football Ground queries	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To provide a response to issues raised by Mr Paul Morgan in relation to the Faraday Road Football Ground.	Jon Winstanley / Paul Hendry	Cllr Heather Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Unregistered and unregulated provision in Children's Social Care	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To review the Council's use of unregistered and unregulated providers of Children's Social Care.	Rebecca Wilshire	Cllr Heather Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Early Intervention and Family Safeguarding.	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the Council's approach to early intervention and family safeguarding, including the Family Hubs and Early Response Hub, the Family Achievement Model (CIN Pilot), and the practice model, changes and priorities in the Council's safeguarding model.	Rebecca Wilshire	Cllr Heather Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Budget Headlines	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the emerging draft budget, budget consultation and expected government settlement.	Joseph Holmes	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
11 February 2025 (Budget Scrutiny)					
Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2025/26	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To consolidate the investments and borrowing strategy for the year ahead by detailing how and where the Council will invest and borrow in the forthcoming year, within a particular framework. This strategy is monitored throughout the year, with a mid-year report going to the Government and Ethics Committee as well as an annual report being presented to Members.	Joseph Holmes	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
Medium Term Financial Strategy	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To set out the financial planning assumptions for future years and how these align these with the Council Strategy to ensure that the Council Strategy will be delivered. The MTFs highlights the overarching key issues facing the Council's finances as well as how there are many different scenarios and uncertainty concerning the future revenue streams for the Council in the future.	Joseph Holmes	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision

	Capital Strategy. Financial Years 2025/26 to 2034/35	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To outline the Capital Strategy covering financial years 2025/26 to 2034/35 and the supporting funding framework, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.	Joseph Holmes/ Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Revenue Budget 2025/26	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the budget proposals for the year ahead that form the basis of the 2024-25 revenue budget and detail the respective Council Tax proposals and resolutions.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-Decision
	Revenue Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To report on the financial performance of the Council's revenue budgets.	Joseph Holmes / Melanie Ellis	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
	Capital Financing Performance Report Q3 2023/24	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	Reports on the under or over spends against the Council's approved capital budget.	Joseph Holmes / Shannon Coleman-Slaughter	Cllr Iain Cottingham (Finance and Resources)	Pre-decision
13 March 2025						
	Attainment of Children on Free School Meals	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the reasons for the persistent gap in attainment between those on free school meals and other children living in West Berkshire and the measures to address this.	AnnMarie Dodds / Rebecca Wilshire	Cllr Heather Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision
	Review of SEND and the High Needs Block	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To receive an update on spend and transformation activity in this area	AnnMarie Dodds / Rebecca Wilshire	Children, Education and Young People's Services	Scrutiny Commission Decision
	Libraries Service	<i>Corporate Effectiveness</i>	To review the performance of the Libraries Service and its funding model.	April Peberdy / Felicity Harrison	Public Health, Culture, Leisure, Sport and Countryside	Scrutiny Commission Decision
	Housing Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To agree the terms of reference for the Housing Task and Finish Group.	Gordon Oliver	N/A	Scrutiny Commission Decision
Longer-Term						
	Wraparound Care	<i>Partnership Effectiveness</i>	To review the roll out of the wraparound care programme across the district.	AnnMarie Dodds / Neil Goddard	Cllr Heather Codling (Children and Family Services)	Scrutiny Commission Decision

Council Strategy Priorities

- Services We Are Proud Of
- A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All
- Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency
- A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire
- Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice

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